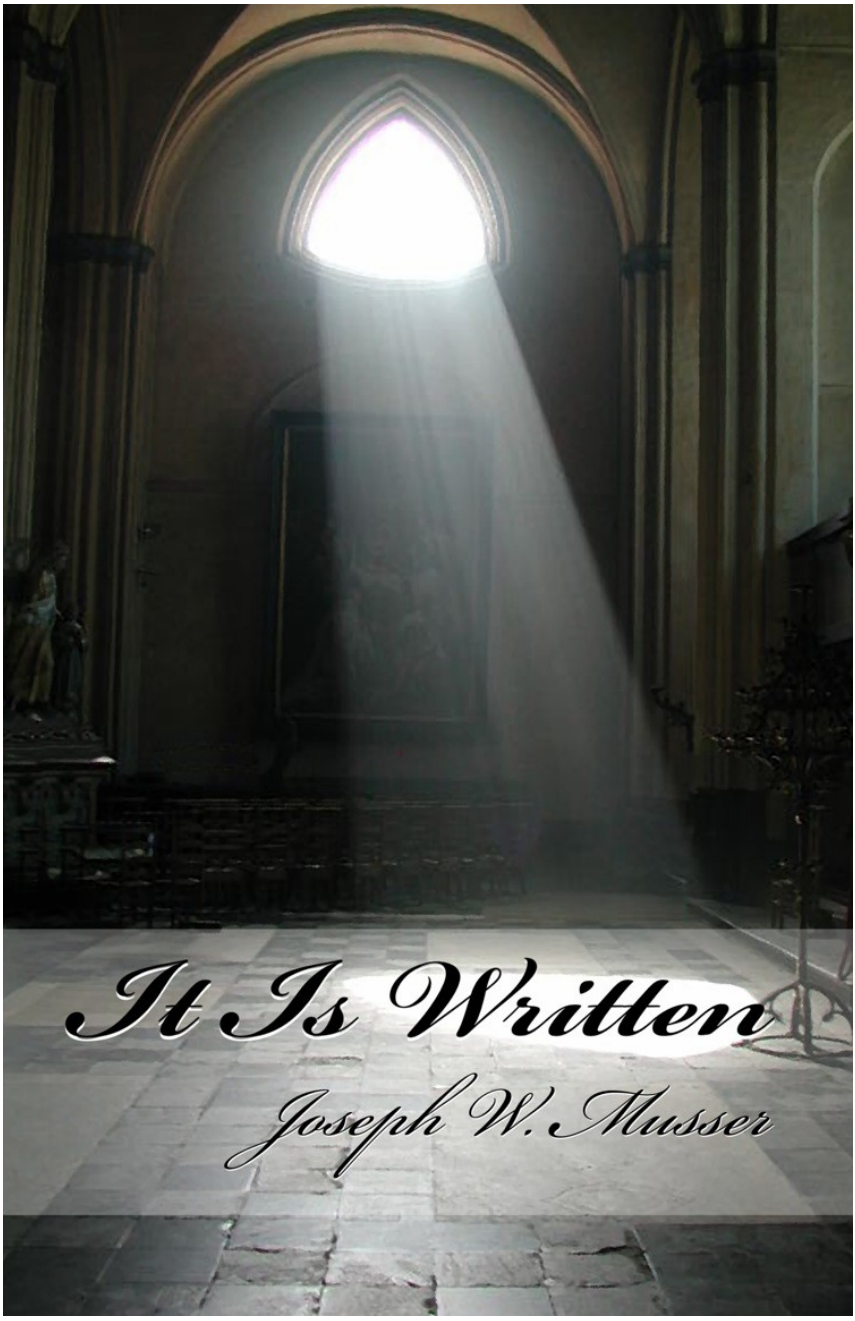
It Is Written
Joseph W. Musser

IT IS WRITTEN

Joseph W. Musser

from the pages of Truth Magazine

Messenger Publications

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It Is Written

The following communication from a reader of *Truth Magazine* is self-explanatory:

> "Editor of *Truth Magazine*:
>
> Is there any reason why members of the Church should not be allowed to read the Doctrine and Covenants and discuss the revelations in Priesthood and Sabbath School classes, when such revelations bear upon the subjects being considered? I have been invited to stay away from Sunday School in my ward unless I stop bringing up teachings contained in the Doctrine and Covenants. Isn't that the law book of God to this generation? If it is why should we not use it as a base authority? I am told that certain Stake Presidents have denied certain members the right to study the book. I wish *Truth Magazine* would comment on this important subject. What does the Lord expect of us?
>
> – 'A STUDENT."

While it is not possible, in our limited space, and perhaps it would not be advisable even if space were available, to comment on all the subjects submitted to us by readers of *Truth Magazine*, occasionally we are impressed with the wisdom of noticing questions of fundamental import. Our correspondent, judging from his statement, feels righteously indignant over the treatment accorded him in the institutions of the Church, and the subject he mentions is of great importance to all seekers after truth.

Complaints similar to the one mentioned have come from members of the Church in widely separated sections. It has not been long since a certain High Priest, a very faithful Latter-day Saint, was up for questioning before the Presidency of one of the Stakes adjacent to Salt Lake City. The brother persisted in justifying his interpretation of Gospel requirements, through the revelations of the Lord as contained in the Doctrine and

Covenants. His inquisitor, with no attempt to correct the brother's interpretation of scripture – evidently unable to do so – with unbecoming emphasis said substantially as follows:

> "Brother _____, in the name of Jesus Christ, and as your Stake President, I counsel you to FORGET THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS and accept President Grant as your lawgiver."

Another brother in an adjoining State was excommunicated from the Church (at least in form) for refusing to cease reading the Doctrine and Covenants and teaching its contents. His president, he reports, enjoined him from reading the Book for three years, saying, "By that time perhaps you will have better sense than to believe all those things."

In another part of the same State a member of a Bishopric was called up before his associates for questioning with reference to his views on Present Church teachings. He fortified himself with the standard Church works, and on meeting with his brethren, asked, "Where are your books?": The response was, as reported, "We haven't any. We don't believe in them. It is only a question whether or not you will harmonize yourself with the Church officials, accepting all they say and do without question." Needless to say, he was dropped from the Bishopric.

A similar prohibition is reported by brethren from the California branch of the Church.

Were the sources of this information at all questionable in character, we would not feel justified in mentioning them; but in each case the brethren involved are men of known honesty and integrity; neither their loyalty to the work, nor their standing in the Church had ever theretofore been questioned. Nor are we blind to the possibility that these alleged breaches do not correctly reflect the views of the leaders of the Church. Yet the present attitude of the leaders in forcing loyalty under all circumstances, arouses the suspicion that actions of their subordinates, such as have been related, meet with their approval. It is notoriously true that members generally throughout the Church, who insist on using the Standard Works of the Church – the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl

of Great Price, – and particularly the Doctrine and Covenants, as their guide in gospel doctrines, are criticised, castigated and, in many instances, are invited to remain away from Sunday School and Priesthood classes, and some from Sacrament meetings, by those who are in authority.

There are many indications that the Church is catholicizing its polity. Formerly the Saints were taught to seek knowledge both by faith and from the best books[1]. The Doctrine and Covenants is one of the best books we know of – it is the law book of God to this people. But today they are admonished to leave such books alone and let the interpretations of scripture contained therein come through their leaders. This is catholicism pure and simple. It is understood by the Protestant World that the Catholic Church, for centuries, has frowned upon its laity reading the scriptures and interpreting them in the light of their own wisdom and understanding. On this point, however, we are aware of the fact that Catholic authors point to the advice of Pius VII to the Bishops of England, April 18, 1820, to "encourage their subjects to read the Holy Scriptures, because nothing can be more useful, more consoling, or more animating. They serve to confirm the faith, to raise the hope, and to inflame the charity of the true Christians."[2]

Yet while this encouragement to the laity of England to read the "Holy Scriptures", appears genuine, it must not be forgotten that the scriptures referred to were those edited by the Catholic Church, and not the scriptures generally accepted by the Christian world:

> "The attitude of the Catholic church against Bible Societies (Societies then engaged in distributing the Bible among the people generally) is one of immutable opposition. As the divinely appointed custodian of and interpreter of Holy writ, she (the Catholic Church) cannot, without turning traitor to herself, approve the indiscriminate distribution of Scripture."[3]

1 D. & C. 88:118; 90:15.
2 Rev. Monsignor John S. Vaughan.
3 Catholic Teachings, by Thomas C. B. Healy, 182, et seq.

> "These crafty Bible Societies", says Pius IX, "which renew the ancient guile of heretics, cease not to thrust their Bibles upon ALL men, EVEN THE UNLEARNED – their Bibles which have been translated against the laws of the Church, and often contain false explanations of the text. Thus, the divine traditions, the teachings of the Fathers, and the authority of the Catholic Church are rejected, and every one IN HIS OWN WAY interprets the words of the Lord, and distorts their meaning, thereby falling into miserable errors."[1]
>
> Pius X (q. v.), in his encyclical Pascendi gregis, 1907, has taken a position against all freedom of Biblical and theological discussion by condemning "modernism" (q. v.) forbidding all meetings of the clergy for theological discussion except in rarest cases and under severe restrictions, and ordering the appointment of "councils of vigilance" in every diocese to condemn, without giving reasons, all meetings and teachings containing the scent of "modernism."[2]

Is the Church, in its present policy, adopting the Catholic attitude? Unmistakably it would seem so. This is a serious situation; when men are denied the right to read and teach the commandments of the Lord given for the guidance of His Church, and accepted by the Church as its guide, there is something radically wrong. Naturally the Saints have deep respect for the positions occupied by their leaders; it is right they should have. But men are human and often err, and should only be followed as they, in their turn, follow the Lord, their head.

Brigham Young, in unmistakable language, pointed to the danger in the Saints reposing too great confidence in their leaders. *Truth Magazine* has heretofore published the statement[3], but it is germane to the present subject, and we repeat it:

"How easy it would be for your leaders to lead you to

1 Bible Questions, by Rudolph G. Brandas.
2 The New Schall-Herzog, Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 10:73.
3 Truth Magazine Vol. 1:132.

destruction, unless you actually know the mind and will of the Spirit yourselves. That is your privilege."[1]

And again:

> "I am more afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are led by Him. I am fearful (lest) they settle down in a state of blind SELF-SECURITY, TRUSTING THEIR ETERNAL DESTINY IN THE HANDS OF THEIR LEADERS WITH A RECKLESS CONFIDENCE THAT IN ITSELF WOULD THWART THE PURPOSES OF GOD IN THEIR SALVATION, and weaken that influence they could give to their leaders, did they know for themselves, by the revelations of Jesus, that they are led in the right way. Let every man and woman know, by the whispering of the Spirit of God to themselves, whether their leaders are walking in the path the Lord dictates or not."[2]

Joseph Smith said, commenting in a case where Elder Pelatiah Brown had been censured for erring in doctrine:

> "I did not like the old man being called up for erring in doctrine. It looks too much like the Methodist, and NOT like the Latter-day Saints. Methodists have creeds which a man MUST believe or be asked out of their church. I WANT LIBERTY OF THINKING AND BELIEVING AS I PLEASE. It feels so good not to be trammelled. It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine."[3]

In His wisdom, God has fortified His word and laws by written records that cannot change with the ravages of time and through the instability of men. Oral traditions undergo many changes in course of time. This is clear from the fact that an

1 Journal of Discourses 4:368.
2 Discourses of Brigham Young, 209.
3 History of the Church, 5:340.

orally expressed rumor can scarcely ever be re-told without variance. The written record is firmly fixed but the mouth-to-mouth report is as capricious as a child's whims. Our first parent, Adam, we are told, stood up before his righteous posterity in the "Valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman", and "predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation." And we are told, "These things are all written in the Book of Enoch and are to be testified to in due time."[1] Thus, we see that record keeping began early. Of what value would Adam's teachings be to the present generation, had they been transmitted only by word-of-mouth?

The law book of God to the Church – the Doctrine and Covenants – is comparable in this day to the tablet on which the Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God. The first copy of this tablet was destroyed but, realizing the necessity of a written code, God made a duplicate, and those commandments have formed a basis for the laws of civilized nations for all time. They are in force today; and they are now – thanks to written records – as definitely in force, as they were the day on which they were given. So sacred were the laws of nations that the decrees of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius compelling heathen worship, and which were written, that not even the king dare annul them until after heaven acted. "If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it BE NOT ALTERED, ..." The written laws of the Medes and Persians were considered unalterable even by the king.

Lehi had not been out of Jerusalem long before the word of the Lord came to him to the effect that in order to preserve his race in the truth he must obtain and take with him the Jewish records then in the hands of custodian Laban. An example of the necessity for "written law" is found in Nehemiah, 8:14-15, when Ezra expounded the law to the Israelites from the written parchments.

In the ministry of Jesus Christ, the necessity for "written law" was paramount. "Think not", said he, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to

1 D & C. 107:56-7.

fulfill."[1] Life eternal was predicated on a belief in the written word. "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."[2] Repeatedly the Lord referred his questioners to the "written law."

> "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He (Jesus) said unto him, WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW? How readest thou?"[3]
>
> "And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is WRITTEN, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner."[4]
>
> "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is WRITTEN, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."[5]

After Jesus had spent forty days in the wilderness with his Father, in fasting and prayer, the record says, "he was an hungered." Three major temptations were placed before him by Satan, and the reply in each instance was prefaced with, "IT IS WRITTEN."[6]

In entering a decree to kill all male infants of a certain age in order to destroy the child Jesus, Herod relied upon the report of the "chief priests and scribes of the people", that Christ was to be born in "Bethlehem of Judea: for thus IT IS WRITTEN by the prophets. ..."[7]

When Jesus Christ appeared to the Nephite Saints after the crucifixion, he taught them many things pertaining to the Gospel; but, observing a missing link in the record, he upbraided

1 Matthew 5:17.
2 John 20:31.
3 Luke 10:25, 26.
4 Ibid 20:17.
5 Ibid 24:45, 46.
6 Matthew 4:1-12.
7 Ibid 2:4, 5.

the historian saying: "How be it that ye have not WRITTEN this thing, that many saints did rise and appear unto many, and did minister unto them? And it came to pass that Nephi remembered that this thing had not been written. And it came to pass that Jesus commanded that it should be written; therefore it was written according as he commanded. And now it came to pass that when Jesus had expounded all the scriptures in one, which they had written, he commanded them that they should teach the things which he had expounded unto them."[1]

That the people are to be judged, not by the oral word, but by that which is WRITTEN is rendered clear in the words of Jesus Christ to the repentant Nephites:

> "For behold, out of the books which have been WRITTEN, and which shall be WRITTEN, shall this people be judged, for by them (the written record) shall their works be known unto men."[2]

From the above it is clear that "that which is WRITTEN" is paramount. God's laws are absolute; they cannot be contravened by human enactments. He said:

> "And these things ye shall not do, except it be required of you by them who desire it that the scriptures might be fulfilled, for ye shall do according to that which is written."[3]

Early in its career the Church was given written laws to guide its members. We read in the History of the Church that a "Committee was appointed by a general assembly of the Church on the 24th of September, 1834, for the purpose of arranging the items of the doctrine of Jesus Christ for the GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH."[4] The Committee consisted of Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams. On August 17, 1835, the work of this committee was presented to

1 3 Nephi 23:11-14.
2 Ibid 27:25.
3 D. & C. 24:14.
4 History of the Church 2:243-251.

a “general assembly of the Church”, and following is the title page and preface of the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants – the law book of God to this people:

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS
of
The Church of the Latter-day Saints:
Carefully Selected
From the Revelations of God,
And Compiled by
Joseph Smith, Junior,
Oliver Cowdery,
Sidney Rigdon,
Frederick G. Williams,
(Presiding Elders of Said Church)
Proprietors
Kirtland, Ohio
Printed by F. G. Williams & Co.
For the Proprietors
1835.

PREFACE

Following the word “Preface”, we excerpt from the statement of the Committee, headed by Joseph Smith, the Prophet, the following:

> “The first part of the book will be found to contain a series of lectures as delivered before a theological class in this place, (Kirtland) and in consequence of their embracing the IMPORTANT DOCTRINE OF SALVATION, we have arranged them into the following work.
>
> The second part contains items of principles for the REGULATION OF THE CHURCH as taken from the revelations which have been given since its organization, as well as from former ones. ...
>
> We do not present this little volume with any other expectation than that we are to be called to answer to

> EVERY PRINCIPLE advanced, in that day when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed, and the reward of every man's labors will be given him."

Surely no lover of truth can mis-interpret the above statement. The book of Doctrine and Covenants was compiled by the Prophets of God to be a guide to the Saints. The Lectures on Faith, (now eliminated from current editions) formed a part of the volume. The items contained in the book were given for the "REGULATION OF THE CHURCH", then why should the Church at the present time object to the use of that book in the Sabbath School and Priesthood classes?

In the "Preface" section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we find:

> "Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants, and MY PREFACE UNTO THE BOOK OF MY COMMANDMENTS, which I have given them to publish unto you, O inhabitants of the earth. Wherefore, fear and tremble, O ye people, for what I the Lord have decreed in them shall be fulfilled. ... Behold, I am God and have spoken it: these COMMANDMENTS are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding, ... Search these commandments FOR THEY ARE TRUE AND FAITHFUL, and the prophecies and promises which are in them SHALL ALL BE FULFILLED."[1]

These, then, are the written commandments of God – they comprise the Law Book of God to the Church. As the Civil laws are published to the people of all sects, so the ecclesiastical laws are given for the guidance of the Church of the First Born.

It matters not that some laws contained in the Doctrine and Covenants are "ill-favored" by the people; still they are the laws of heaven. It matters not that the nation has declared its repugnance to certain laws pertaining to salvation, and which are

1 D. & C. 1:6.

included in that book, and which MUST be obeyed if the blessings are to be obtained – those laws are of God and are eternal. This fact was made clear by the late President George Q. Cannon. He said:

> "But the Prophet Joseph not only received the ministration of angels, but actually had revelations from God, which are WRITTEN in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and which are NOW the word of God TO THE CHURCH."[1]

President Wilford Woodruff stated:

> "I hold in my hand our testament (Doctrine and Covenants). The testator is dead, has been dead for a great many years. He sealed his testimony with his blood. That testament IS IN FORCE, has been in force upon the world from the day of his death, and not only from that day, but from the time THESE REVELATIONS were given to the inhabitants of the earth. That testament contains a volume of the most important revelations God ever gave to man. Fifty years ago, or nearly so, when He gave some of these revelations, the Lord said to Joseph Smith, "If you believe my words you will go and prune my vineyard while the day lasts; if you believe these revelations I have given you, you will take hold and build up this kingdom."[2]

We rejoice in the fact that these matters were treated on and made clear at the recent semi-annual conference of the Church. Several of the speakers touched the subject lightly, stating that the Saints should abide in "the faith of their fathers," that they should "be guided by the revelation of the Lord," etc., but it remained for President Rudger Clawson, of the Quorum of Twelve, to give the word of the Lord to this generation in plainness. Said he in part:

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1 Journal of Discourses 26:242.

2 Conference Report, April 6, 1880, p. 7.

> "The Doctrine and Covenants justifies the deepest consideration and study. Four or five years of intensive study of this book – Doctrine and Covenants – would be the equivalent of a University Education, in the higher brackets. We cannot give too much attention to this book. It covers EVERY PHASE of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."[1]

Joseph Smith said:

> "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world upon which ALL blessings are predicated; and when we obtain any blessing from God, it is BY OBEDIENCE to that law upon which it is predicated."[2]

President Clawson re-affirmed this law. He read from Section 132, showing that Celestial (or plural) marriage was a part of the Celestial law and MUST be obeyed by those who are candidates for Celestial glory. He read from Section 88, as follows:

> "For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom, cannot abide a celestial glory; and he who cannot abide the law of a terrestrial kingdom, cannot abide a terrestrial glory; he who cannot abide the law of telestial kingdom, cannot abide a telestial glory; therefore he is not meet for a kingdom of glory. Therefore he must abide a kingdom which is not a kingdom of glory."[3]

Thus the importance of the Law Book of God to the Church is made clear. Every law contained therein MUST be obeyed. There is not one law for the leaders and another for the "rank and file." Little wonder it is that President Clawson, understanding the law as he does, should admonish the Saints to inform themselves on it by becoming conversant with the revelations of the Lord as contained in the Doctrine and

1 Conference Report, October 6, 1939, p. 28.
2 D. & C. 130:20-21.
3 D. & C. 88:22-24.

Covenants. He said, “the Saints are eager for the word of the Lord”; and so they are, but many of them are being denied the right to seek for it in the channels the Lord has provided for the purpose.

We say to our correspondent, therefore, to fear not the ukase of men, but abide by the revelations of God as contained in the Law Book of God to the Church. Man cannot change them and GOD WILL NOT.

Trend Towards Dictatorship In Church and State

> "That they (the rights of the Priesthood) may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men, IN ANY DEGREE OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the Priesthood, or the authority of that man."[1]

The world trend is toward dictatorships. This is true alike of civil and ecclesiastical governments. Politically we have the communism of Russia and the Fascism of Germany and Italy, not mentioning near-kingdoms existing throughout the nations and which are on the borderline between representative government and dictatorships. Even professed democracies are gradually merging into the latter class. This is true of the trend in the United States as recently expressed by the Hon. William E. Borah, U. S. Senator, who said:

I read in a current magazine these words of an important official (of the United States):

> "It seems clear that in these difficult times we need centralization of leadership. From what source can it be obtained? Can it come from the 435 Congressmen and 96 Senators? Can it come from the nine Justices of the Supreme Court. It would appear that the Chief Executive is the only source from which national leadership may be sought with any hope of effective results."

Mussolini never stated the doctrine of Fascism with greater boldness or clarity than it is here stated.[2]

This article is concerned more particularly with the spirit

1 D. & C. 121:37.

2 Truth Magazine 3:11.

of dictatorship as it affects the Church.

In years agone, it is claimed that Catholicism established itself in christendom as a dictator of religious thought. The Pope at Rome sat as God, and his word was regarded as final. At his decree many atrocious acts against humanity are recorded as having been committed.

Inspired, no doubt, by the Lord to break away from the dictation of anti-Christ, the "Reformers" of the 14th to the 16th centuries strove diligently for freedom – for a true church democracy. Some forfeited their lives in the fight, while others – Luther (who broke the power of the Catholic Church in Germany) among them – lived to vindicate their cause; and through them the way to religious freedom was blazed. This movement of the "Reformers", however, resulted in the birth of many sects and churches, all professing to represent God, but each differing from the other thus adding greatly to the confusion. It is claimed there are now 250 sects professing christianity.

Confused by the sophistries of church leaders, Joseph Smith was led to adopt the admonition of the Apostle James,[1] with the result that he was told to join none of the churches, for "They were all wrong; that all their creeds were an abomination in His sight; that those professors were all corrupt, that they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."[2]

Joseph Smith was subsequently endowed with the Holy Priesthood – with the higher or Apostolic calling and, under the authority thereof, was authorized and directed to organize God's Church on earth, which he did. Among the articles of that Church adopted as a command from the Lord is the following:

> "And all things shall be done by COMMON CONSENT in the Church by much prayer and faith; ..."[3]

Thus at the very beginning, a democratic spirit was established in the operations of the affairs of the Church. True

1 James 1:5.
2 JS-H 1:19.
3 D. & C. 26:2. (Also see 28:13).

the elements of a theocracy were present in the organization, for the act was directed by God; but the Lord designed that the Saints, in keeping with their agency rights, should have a voice in the government of the Church. Following in the spirit of this freedom in religion, the Prophet was led to promulgate, as one of the declarations of belief of the Saints, this claim:

> "We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow ALL MEN the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may."[1]

In our last issue of *Truth Magazine* we pointed out the attitude of the Prophets Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and John Taylor upon this all-important point of the exercise of "Free Agency." The principle is fundamental. "There are no freer people upon the face of the earth today," said the late President Joseph F. Smith, "than the Latter-day Saints. They are bound to the Church by no tie or strings, but by their own convictions of truth."[2] And on another occasion he proclaimed to all Israel:

> "We desire that the Latter-day Saints will exercise the liberty wherewith they have been made free by the gospel of Jesus Christ; for they are entitled to know the right from the wrong, to see the truth, and draw the line between it and error; and it is their privilege to JUDGE FOR THEMSELVES and to act upon their own FREE AGENCY with regard to their choice as to sustaining or otherwise those who should exercise the presiding functions among them."[3]

This teaching conforms to the spirit of the Church in the apostolic dispensation:

> "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted

1 AoF 11.
2 Gospel Doctrine, p. 58.
3 Ibid pp. 59-60.

them to all men, as every man had need."[1]

Among the Nephite Saints we learn that:

> "They taught and did minister one to other; and they had ALL THINGS COMMON AMONG THEM, every man dealing justly, one with another. And they did all things, even as Jesus had commanded them."[2]

But the critic may contend that this "having all things common", pertained to the economic welfare of the Saints and not to their spiritual life. Let us not be thus deceived; the Prophet Mosiah gave this enlightening counsel:

> "Therefore choose you by the voice of this people, judges, that ye may be judged according to the laws which have been given you by our fathers, which are correct, and which were given them by the hand of the Lord.
>
> Now it is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right, but it is common for the lesser part of the people to desire that which is not right; therefore this shall ye observe, and MAKE IT YOUR LAW to do your business BY THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE.
>
> And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you, yea, then is the time he will visit you with the great destruction even as he hath hitherto visited this land."[3]

Brigham Young tersely expressed the thought thus:

> "It is as much my right to differ from other men, as it is theirs to differ from me, in points of doctrine and principle, when our minds cannot at once arrive at the same conclusion. ...

1 Acts 2:44-5.
2 3 Nephi 26:19.
3 Mosiah 29:25-27.

> I am not going to drive a man or a woman to heaven. A great many think that they will be able to flog people into heaven, but this can never be done, for the intelligence of us IS AS INDEPENDENT AS THE GODS. People are not to be driven, and you can put into a gnat's eye all the souls of the children of men that are driven into heaven by preaching hell-fire."[1]

Here the Prophets of God have outlined the Lord's will concerning the exercise of agency in man. Men are not to be driven – forced. They are to have freedom to think and to act. Their initiative is to be encouraged. God does not design to "COMMAND IN ALL THINGS, for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward."[2]

But under present ecclesiastical leadership men are expected to take orders and ask no questions. Never before in the history of the Church in this dispensation, have the leaders demanded loyalty to THEMSELVES AS INDIVIDUALS, as at the present time. In their efforts to bring about this condition, the most sacred rights of men are ignored, the rules of judicial procedure, as the Lord has revealed them, are set aside, and the leaders have at one and the same time assumed the role of the accuser, prosecutor, judge, jury and bailiff. Evidence tending to establish innocence in accordance with the revelations of the Lord will not be heard. The scriptures are taboo. There is little difference in present procedure and that which condemned the Swiss reformer Zwingle to the flames, except that today the leaders lack the power of execution. But they would stifle freedom of thought and of speech and compel a servile allegiance, itself an attitude without justification in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Stake High Councils are not asked to sit in trial on men accused of sin, but are directed to CUT OFF such and such, if they refuse to sign a statement of recantation, promising loyalty "without any mental reservation whatever."

A case in mind, is one recently reported as originating in Pocatello, Idaho. The Brother and Sister were disfellowshipped

1 Discourses of Brigham Young, 99.
2 D. & C. 58:26.

from the Church by the Ward Bishopric, for teaching the doctrines of the Prophets on the testimony of a third party. Appealing to the Stake Presidency, the brother asked the privilege of citing scripture (the Revelations of the Lord) to prove justification for his actions. He was told:

> "We don't want the scriptures. It is you who is on trial, not the Church. If we allow you to go into the scriptures it would be the same as trying the Church. We can't do it. WE HAVE OUR INSTRUCTIONS."

In another Ward in Idaho, a Bishop recently announced that any members of the Church having in their homes either the Leaf in Review, by Allred, the Francis M. Darter books, or the *Truth Magazine* Magazine, would be excommunicated from the Church; and one young man there was given a month in which to repudiate the teachings of his father, which were clearly in harmony with the revelations of the Lord as contained in the Doctrine and Covenants – the Law Book of God to the Church.

This reminds us of the action taken by the Church authorities against twenty-one members at Short Creek, Arizona; [1] "un-churching" them because of their refusal to sustain the leaders of the Church unreservedly in all that they might do, together with their refusal to repudiate the principle of Celestial or plural marriage as revealed by God to Joseph Smith. These people in Short Creek were not practicing polygamy, but they believed in the principle and defended it against "all comers." In taking them off the books of the Church, the organization ceased to function in that district and a monogamous Bishop was literally left without a flock. These people at Short Creek were sober, prayerful, industrious and deeply religious. They were born in the Church and had been used as pioneers in assisting in building new commonwealths as well as in proselyting for the Church in foreign missions. They were in no sense rebellious, but claimed the right to believe in and sustain the principles of the Gospel as revealed by the Lord. They were not permitted to produce evidence of innocence, nor to argue their case, but were offered the "either take it or leave it" panacea. In that action, the

1 See Truth Magazine 1:17.

Church gave up a faithful congregation numbering better than one hundred souls, who were honest, humble, sincere and worthy; and yet Elders are sent into the world at an unwarranted expense to parents, to bring a few half converted members into the fold!

Like action was taken against a group of Saints at Millville, Hyrum Stake, Cache County, Utah. The action was detailed in *Truth Magazine*.[1] The group numbered eight, four brethren and four sisters whose names are as follows: Martin Olson and wife, Fanny J. Olson, Eslie D. Jenson and wife Letha O. Jenson; Earl D. Olson, Martha Y. Jessop, Allie Jessop and Don E. Wayman. All were active in the Church. None, as we are informed, had entered into the practice of plural marriage though they professed a belief in that principle in accordance with the revelations of the Lord. Two of the accused, a young man and a young woman, were neither married nor immediately contemplating marriage. The other three sisters were mothers respectively of 9, 11 and 14 children. The brethren had spent their lives in supporting the church institutions, paying their tithes and observing the spirit of the word of wisdom in accordance with their understanding of the principle. Their integrity or faith had never before been questioned. They each believed in the fulness of the Gospel and defended the same when deemed wise to do so. These Saints were called before the Stake Presidency. Their request to be heard was denied them, with the demand that they sign a LOYALTY PLEDGE to avoid excommunication, failing in which, action was taken against them. A statement was read to them, purportedly from the Presidency of the Church, directing the Stake authorities to excommunicate the accused if they refused to sign the paper presented and which reads as follows:

> "I, the undersigned member of the Millville Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly declare and affirm that I, WITHOUT ANY MENTAL RESERVATION WHATEVER, support the Presidency and Apostles of the Church; that I repudiate any intimation that any one of the Presidency or Apostles of

1 Truth magazine 1:129

> the Church is living a double life, that I repudiate those who are falsely accusing them; that I denounce the practice and advocacy of plural marriage as being out of harmony with the declared principles of the Church at the present time; and that I myself am not living such alleged marriage relationship."

The answer to the above, of those involved, was clear, unequivocal, free from animus and entirely christianlike. They expressed willingness to "support the Presidency and Apostles of the Church, insofar as their actions, teachings and counsels conformed to the Gospel as revealed;" and that they repudiated "those who FALSELY accused the leaders, or any other person, of wrong doing." They declined to sign the statement which bound them, "without any mental reservation, whatever" to sustain the Presidency and Apostles in all they may do; and also refused to "denounce the practice and advocacy of plural marriage as being out of harmony with the declared principles of the Church at the present time," with this statement:

> "We would like to harmonize our faith and ideals with those of our file leaders could we do so without stultification. The question involves a principle of conscience, and to conform to the requirements of the Church means a repudiation of a faith and belief dearer to us than life itself. With us plural marriage is an eternal law to which ALL MEN must subscribe in order to regain the presence of their Heavenly Father. It is a law of the Holy Priesthood; one that God Himself, and His Son, Jesus Christ, were forced to subscribe to and live. In the face of this belief, to denounce those adhering to the divine law, would in our opinion, amount to no less than a repudiation of our Lord. ..."

Thus you see dear brethren, that while we hold our standing in the Church as a most precious endowment, and regard fellowship with its members, together with their love and confidence, as among the greatest enjoyments in life, to take the position demanded of us by your council would only tend to

stultify our consciences and bring upon us the just condemnation of our Heavenly Father.

The action of the Stake Authorities was premeditated, arbitrary, un-christian, vindictive in its nature, indefensible, and wholly contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and the rules revealed by the Lord to govern in such cases. As shown, the Saints were "willing to support the Presidency and Apostles of the Church, as the leaders thereof," in righteousness; they "unhesitatingly repudiated any one who knowingly accused the brethren falsely," and stood ready to defend them when thus accused; they asserted in no uncertain terms, their allegiance to the fulness of the Gospel as contained in the Law Book of God to the Church – the Doctrine and Covenants – and did everything that Saints of God could be expected to do, to harmonize their views with those of their brethren, but to no avail. Action was taken purportedly severing them from the Church and branding them as outcasts from the kingdom. The stand of these good people was not unlike that of Martin Luther before what is known as the "Diet at Worms," in the year 1521. Said he:

> "I cannot submit my faith either to the Pope or to the council (called to examine into his case) because it is as clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless, therefore, I am convinced by the TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE, or by the clearest reasoning – uncles I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, – and unless they thus render my conscience bound, by the word of God, I cannot and will not retract, for IT IS UNSAFE FOR A CHRISTIAN TO SPEAK AGAINST HIS CONSCIENCE. HERE I STAND, I CAN DO NO OTHER, MAY GOD HELP ME! AMEN!"[1]

Among the many such cases, it will be profitable to notice another, which directly points to the increasing spirit of dictatorship in the Church. This case concerns Brother and Sister John A. Bistline of the Logan Second Ward. These good people, the parents of five children, were active in their ward and Stake.

1 Outlines of Ecclesiastical History, Roberts, p. 241.

They were teaching the Gospel as revealed. They were called before the High Council in their stake, and it was demanded of them that they sign a similar statement to that presented to the Millville Saints detailed above, and also to the Short Creek Saints. And, too, it must be noted that this statement was not presented for the acceptance of the Saints generally, but only in sporadic cases such as we are noting, thus rendering the action discriminatory and in the nature of "class legislation," notwithstanding God has made it positive that He is no "respecter of persons."

Brother and Sister Bistline respectfully refused to sign the "pledge" and action was accordingly taken.

In their written defense they called attention to the futility of attempting to prove their loyalty to the leaders of the Church by the mere signing of a pledge; that if they had sinned in adhering to the revealed word of God in their faith and teachings, their subscribing to the statement mentioned could mean to them no less than a surrender of their agency, an act at once displeasing to the Lord and stultifying to themselves. "It is true," they said, "some parts of the statement we can unreservedly affirm, but you refuse this privilege without affirming the complete statement."

> "We do," the letter of defense continues, "support the presidency and the apostles of the Church in all their righteous acts. We will repudiate any intimation that any one of the presidency or of the apostles is leading a double life, unless such intimation is supported by infallible evidence, and then we choose to leave the matter with God. We will not hold fellowship with false accusers.
>
> "We are aware that the advocacy and practice of plural marriage is not in accord with the declared principles of the Church at the present time, yet we hold no brief in defense of any principle, declared or otherwise, which is contrary to the word and will of the Lord. The Church to us is not infallible in its decisions; having in the past, as it will doubtless do in the future, retrace actions as occasions require.
>
> "We do not denounce those who sincerely claim

divine right and approval to advocate and practice plural marriage. We claim the privilege to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience, and allow all men the same privilege. We will not denounce or persecute, or harm any one because of his religious belief. We leave the matter with God alone."

The summons in the case provided "That in case we do not receive your statement (signed), a copy of which is hereby delivered to you, prior to said 8th day of March, at 8 o'clock p. m. (the summons being served on March 4th), this summons and citation will be considered binding by the Stake Presidency and High Council. (This wording in plain English means that if the accused would sign the pledge of recantation provided for their signatures by the leaders of the Church, all charges of wrong doing would be dropped, and they be permitted to remain in full fellowship; a species of force akin to blackmailing).

"We told the serving witnesses," the statement of the accused reads, "that it was our intention to appear at the trial provided we were given the privilege of bringing witnesses and of speaking in our own behalf. Accordingly they visited the Stake Presidency and reported to us later that we would be permitted to make a statement, but WOULD NOT be permitted to PRESENT ANY ARGUMENT in our behalf! The brethren then spent some time laboring with us, trying to induce us to sign the statement, even using veiled threats respecting our social, moral and economic standing in the community, should we be excommunicated.

"On Sunday morning, March 8, I (John A. Bistline, one of the accused), met with the Bishopric of the Logan Second Ward, at the suggestion of a friend, and asked them to intercede with the Stake Presidency, in behalf of myself and wife, that the case might be first reviewed before the Bishopric in accordance with proper procedure as outlined in the Doctrine and Covenants. The brethren took the matter up with the Presidency and reported their refusal; stating that this was a Stake Presidency affair, and 'THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED

THEIR INSTRUCTIONS FROM HIGHER UP.'

"We accordingly appeared before the High Council, and when the trial began I asked that our statement be read which was acceded to, 'provided it did not attempt a defense of plural marriage, nor contain a lot of scriptural references.'

"President Anderson, in opening the case, said that the story was a long one; that the 'question was not who was right and who was wrong' but it was a question of sustaining the Church leaders on the earth. Asked what part of the statement was objectionable to me to sign, I replied that the phrase, "without any mental reservation whatever" was very objectionable, as I took that to mean that I must support the leaders of the Church in every activity, whether religious, political, or otherwise, and whether right or wrong. This I felt was denying me my agency and not in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel. To the question, 'Can you not repudiate all living in plural marriage since the Manifesto,' I answered, No; that my own father-in-law was living in that principle, and he was in full fellowship with the Church; that the leading brethren knew about him, that he had presided over a branch of the Church in Arizona for years, notwithstanding he had taken his wives since the Manifesto, they being sealed to him by President Anthony W. Ivins.

"I was asked if I did not know the practice and advocacy of plural marriage was against the declared principles of the Church and contrary to the laws of the land. I answered that I stood in defense of no principle, declared or otherwise, that was against the word and will of the Lord; that the Church from 1862 to 1890 had taught and advocated that principle in defiance of the law of the land, claiming the civil law conflicted with the law of God, and that God's law MUST take precedence. Answering further questions I maintained:

(a) That while I believed in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining all laws, not in conflict with the word and

will of the Lord; I also claimed the privilege of worshiping God according to the dictates of my own conscience and in accordance with His revelations in this dispensation.

(b) That even though the Saints may be barred as Church members from living the order of plural marriage, they should not be barred from discussing all principles pertaining to salvation, with a view to awakening a stronger faith in such principles.

(c) With reference to the oft repeated statement by the enemies of plural marriage, that the Doctrine and Covenants[1] provided a release of the Saints from practicing the principle, if and when their enemies should come upon them, I replied that, as I understood it, the revelation had no such meaning; that before the Manifesto was issued the leaders of the Church contended that such implied release applied to the building of a house to the Lord and NOT to the living of a principle of salvation. And, too, that the Saints had not "gone to with all their might" to live that principle as the revelation requires, and therefore could not claim immunity under its provisions.

(d) That it is the present policy of the leaders, according to my observation to say one thing to one group of people and another to another group, for while some are being handled for living in plural marriage, it is well known that others in presiding position, are living the law, and they are not being molested.

(e) That some actions of the Church leaders, past and present, have as their purpose the popularizing of the Church with the world. To support this I read from Church History, of the Introduction, and which was formerly contained in the Doctrine and Covenants, as follows:

> "In as much as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy, we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one

1 Doctrine and Covenants 124:49.

husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again."[1]

I explained that the above was contained In a Doctrine and Covenants published by the Church in 1854, whereas the revelation on Plural Marriage was accepted by the Church as a tenet, in 1852; my views being that this statement was put out to the world as a temporary shield for the Church, much as it is supposed Abraham had put forth the idea that Sarah was his sister and not his wife, in order to deceive the heathen king and protect his life.

(f) That so far as condemning the Saints for attempting to live the law of plural marriage in this day was concerned, I did not feed I had a right to sit in judgment on my brethren when the matter involved the right of conscience and religious liberty; that it was a matter for the Lord to handle.

(g) I admitted as my belief that President Grant presided over the Priesthood in the Church, that he held the Melchisedek Priesthood, but that I did not think he held the "keys to Priesthood." That Brigham Young had said: "No man can stand at our head except God reveals it from heaven." I know of no such a revelation in President Grant's case. I sustain him as President of the Church. The Twelve Apostles cannot confer the keys upon anyone by virtue of their office as members of the Twelve. Jesus said to his apostles, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you." After he had ordained his apostles and they had officiated for some time in such office, he said to Peter, "I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom, that whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever ye loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven", showing that the office of an apostle in the Quorum of Twelve is one thing, and to hold the keys of the kingdom is another. A similar occurrence happened in this dispensation. The Twelve were chosen and ordained in 1835, and in 1843-4 Joseph Smith

1 History of the Church, Vol. 5, page 30.

conferred on some of them and a few other faithful brethren, all the keys, powers and authority which he himself held. Since these blessings were not given to the members of the Quorum of Twelve exclusively, it indicates that the apostles, as such, had no more right to the keys than other high priests whom the Lord might choose to possess them.

(h) Read from Millennial Star[1] showing that to "do anything we are told to do by those presiding over us, even though we know it to be wrong is worse than folly to us", and that God is not pleased with that kind of obedience. Joseph Smith said, "If the Church knew all the commandments, one-half they would reject through prejudice and ignorance." Therefore, because the Church rejects a principle, is not evidence that it is not the will of the Lord that that principle should be lived.

President Anderson gave as an excuse for not letting our case be reviewed by our Bishopric before being considered by the High Council, that he had received his orders from those "higher-up" and was proceeding accordingly. One of the members of the Council, whose attitude toward me had been friendly, after the verdict had been rendered and before the Council was dismissed, advised me, "When the wind blows too strongly, it is wisdom to bow with the wind." After action was taken against us, by permission, I spoke as follows:

"If I have said anything tonight that has offended, I want to be forgiven, for I did not wish to speak in anger; I only want to stand for the thing which I know to be right and to hold fast to my free agency. I believe the time has come when the Lord will write His laws on the hearts of men, and every man will have to know for himself the will of God. I know that He hears and answers prayers for I have proved it. I hope the time will soon come when we will all come to the unity of the faith and do the will of the Father. I then related how the action of the Presidency and high council had fulfilled prophecy: that a few months ago one whom I consider a Prophet of God, told a

1 Millennial Star 14:594-6.

> group of people in which my wife and I were present, "that the time would soon come when we would all be presented with a statement to sign, and upon our refusal to do so, we would be excommunicated in spite of any defense we might make."
>
> The rest of the group were all excommunicated a few weeks ago, (the Millville Saints); we are the only two of the group remaining, and tonight you have finished fulfilling that prophecy."

And thus was dictatorship again employed in seeking to destroy two faithful Latter-day Saints. Their only offense was a belief in the laws of God as published to the world. They were not polygamists; they were not advocating any principle that God had not revealed as necessary to be lived; they voiced their willingness to sustain the leaders of the Church in all of their actions that were righteous, and to repudiate all wrong doers, and to reject false accusations. This was not enough. They must accept men's actions whether right or wrong, and bow to an unholy dictatorship, even though it robbed them of their agency and forfeited to them precious blessings pertaining to the hereafter. Can it be said that the Pope of Rome was ever more of a dictatorial autocrat than the present church regime? It is unprecedented that a professed servant of the Lord in this dispensation should wander so far afield as to demand blind obedience – an endorsement of his acts, right or wrong – such is the demand of tyrants. A like principle is involved in requesting a check on the bank signed in blank. Things like that are sometimes done between friends, but when such an irregular procedure is demanded on pain of punishment, it is high time that the unreasonable, illegal and obviously improper exaction be rejected. And this is just what happened in the cases mentioned. The Saints could do nothing less than remain real men and women – conscience free.

We know of cases where Stake Presidencies, High Councils, and even Bishoprics, have been disbanded by the leaders, for refusing to take arbitrary and improper action against men who were living in accordance with the revealed word of the Lord, but who were accused of violating the "rules of the

Church," as their leaders had admitted having themselves done.

Such high-handed procedure on the part of the leaders is not essentially different to the recent efforts of the President of the United States to subjugate the Supreme Court of the country to his will. It is the very essence of dictatorship. And we should not overlook the fact that modern dictators are not enthroned through force; they are placed in power through the mental paucity and flabbiness of the people, and by the people themselves – people who, through periods of dissipation, either physical, mental or spiritual, are so weakened and senile as to accept and vote for dictators to do for them that which their laziness and servility prevent them from doing themselves. Thus we have a Stalin in Russia, a Hitler in Germany, and a Mussolini in Italy, each confirmed in his position by vote of the people, and yet each exercising the most arbitrary and tyrannical powers known to man. An example of this spirit of voluntary yielding personal liberties is noted in the history of the Children of Israel in their hegira from Egypt's slavery. Hunger and fear frequently lead them to wish for the "leeks and onions" of Egypt with its tyrannical dictatorship in preference to freedom under the Priesthood of God coupled with the necessity of personal effort and individual initiative. And such, too, is the present dictatorship in the Church, acceded to by the Saints, at least by their passive inaction, though it is of such a vicious nature as to rob them of their rights of conscience, rendering impotent in their lives the fruits of the Gospel.

It is said that Lucifer sought the position accorded to Jesus Christ. He proposed to save the human family by force – take from them their agency, reducing them to the state of the animal intellect:

> "Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to DESTROY THE AGENCY OF MAN, which I, the Lord God, had given him; and also that should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten I caused that he should be cast down, and he became Satan."[1]

1 Moses 4:3.

The battle in heaven was fought out on this principle – Free Agency v. Force. When Satan's plan was rejected he declared: "I will take the treasures of earth, and with gold and silver, I will buy up armies and navies, popes and priests and will reign with blood and horror in the earth." That is dictatorship pure and simple; that is, in effect, the dictatorship that the Church leaders seek today, and if it be contended that by reason of their faith in God, their clean lives, parentage, training, seeming humility, they could not actually entertain the extreme notions of Satan, yet such acts as we have related, in their final analysis, will, if permitted to mature, lead to the same results. It is a question of accepting all the actions – present and future – of the leaders or "get out."

It is common today to hear certain of the Saints say that while they know "all is not well in the Church and they wish the leaders would return to the principles God revealed in the beginning, yet we will do as we are told, right or wrong"; some more reckless ones going to the extreme of asserting that even though they KNOW that which the leaders tell them to do is wrong, they will obey and let them (the leaders), assume the consequences. Such cringing baseness is unworthy a true servant of God. A fawning obedience is the act of weaklings. It is an illogical and a servile attitude. Obviously the leaders will be held accountable for their own acts; but so will each individual. The leaders can neither save nor damn, that is God's prerogative. Individual salvation can come only through individual effort, faithfulness and loyalty to the principles of salvation. Those who prostrate themselves before the leaders pledging unholy allegiance, whether it be for financial or priestly favor, are not entitled to the fellowship of true Saints of God. To pin one's faith on the arm of flesh, is a fatal mistake. Slightly paraphrasing Henley's lines:

"It matters not how leaders rave
And change the meaning of the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the Captain of my soul."

"Those who would give up essential liberty," said

Benjamin Franklin, "to purchase a little temporary safety (or the good will of their leaders), deserves neither liberty nor safety."

The present leader, earlier in his career as an apostle, stated:

> "The Church is definitely and fully Christian in every possible interpretation of that characterization. It proclaims itself to be the Church of Jesus Christ and is so denominated. The Christian virtues constitute the standards of living for its members. It advocates no COMPULSION but only PERSUASION through KINDNESS AND LOVE."[1]

But now the same leader has put forth a compulsory edict that CERTAIN Saints sign a loyalty pledge (which could have no other effect than stultification), or submit to being excommunicated!

This, of course counters the early Church position as expressed Editorially in the Millennial Star:

> "Willing obedience to the laws of God, administered by the Priesthood, is indispensable to salvation (but) none are required to tamely and blindly submit to a man because he has a portion of the Priesthood. We have heard men who hold the Priesthood remark, that they would do anything they were told to do by those who presided over them, [even] IF THEY KNEW IT WAS WRONG, but such obedience as this is worse than folly to us; it is slavery in the extreme, and the man who would thus willingly degrade himself, should not claim a rank among intelligent beings, until he turns from his folly. ... Others in the extreme exercise of their Almighty (!) authority, have taught that such obedience was necessary, and that no matter what the Saints were told to do BY THEIR PRESIDENTS, they should do it without asking any questions.
>
> When the Elders of Israel will so far indulge in these extreme notions of obedience as to teach them to the

1 Truth Magazine 1:131.

people it is generally because they have it in their hearts to do wrong themselves, and wish to pave the way to accomplish that wrong, or else because they have done wrong and wise to use the cloak of their authority to cover it with, lest it be discovered by their superiors, who would require an atonement at their hands.

We would ask for what is the Priesthood given unto men? IT IS THAT THEY MAY HAVE A RIGHT TO ADMINISTER THE LAW OF GOD. HAVE THEY THEN A RIGHT TO MAKE VOID THAT LAW? VERILY NO. ...

If a man could have as much authority as the Almighty, it would not authorize him to do wrong, nor counsel another to do wrong; and the man that will administer with partiality, for the sake of screening iniquity, will find his stewardship will be taken from him. ..."[1]

"But," says one, "did not God say of those called of the Lord to the Priesthood:

> "And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation."[2]

"That being true how can one question the words and actions of the leaders and doubt their efficacy?" This query is sufficiently answered by the late President B. H. Roberts:

> "We believe in an inspired priesthood for the Church. We believe in inspired teachers; but that does not require us to believe that every word that is spoken from the pulpit is the very word of God. Sometimes they (the leaders) speak merely from their human knowledge, influenced by passions; influenced by interests of men, and by anger,

1 Millennial Star 14:594-6.
2 D. & C. 68:4.

> and vexation, and all those things that surge in upon the minds of even servants of God. When they so speak, then that is not scripture, that is not the word of God, nor the power of God unto salvation; but when they speak as moved upon by the Holy Ghost, their voice then becomes the voice of God."[1]

It is related that President Young once said in the pulpit: "This morning Brother Brigham spoke to you, but now the Lord is going to speak."

The late Charles W. Penrose is recorded as saying:

> "President Wilford Woodruff is a man of wisdom and experience, and we respect him, but we do not believe his personal views or utterances are revelations from God: and when "Thus saith the Lord" comes from him, the Saints investigate it: they do not shut their eyes and take it down like a pill."[2]

Here President Penrose enunciated a correct principle – a principle applicable alike to every servant of the Lord. Our present leaders are mortal and are subject to the making of mistakes. To pledge endorsement of all their acts, right or wrong, as the "loyalty pledge" provides, is an act of stultification not only on the part of the signers but also the leaders who are requiring such a pledge. To do so is an acquiescence of the dictatorship this article is treating.

There is no place in the Gospel of Jesus Christ for dictatorship. It tends to weaken character, to degrade manhood, and to utterly defeat the purposes of Father in his children. A specific instance of this situation is found in the recent action of Elder M. F. Cowley. He was formerly a member of the Quorum of Twelve and, along with other members, was reported to have been given license to seal worthy Saints in the Patriarchal order of marriage. It is assumed he was faithful to his trust. In the Reed Smoot senatorial melee, he agreed to submit himself a sacrifice and step out of the Quorum until the excitement died

1 Defense of the Faith, 2:456.
2 Mill. Star, 54:191 (Feb. 7, 1882).

down. He did so uncomplainingly. For several years thereafter he was accorded financial assistance, respect and honor by the President of the Church. But when the present leader attained the head, Elder Cowley was severely disciplined, cowed, finally being forced to sign a re-cantation statement by which he repudiated his former actions taken in pursuance of the authority given him by the servants of the Lord, and, in effect, outlawed one of the foremost principles of the Gospel. He did that, as we believe, not from conviction, but to appease the unholy demands of a self-established dictatorship that preferred the praises of the world to the commendation of heaven. Under the demand of his leaders, Elder Cowley, Galileo like, renounced that which he had previously proclaimed as truth, and which he must yet know to be true!

It is a serious thing to tamper with and to subjugate conscience. God meant His children to be free, and in that freedom – let it require days or aeons – to work out their salvation along broad lines leading to Godhood. Jefferson understood this principle of agency, at least, in part. Said he: "The rights of conscience we never submitted, we could not submit. We are answerable for them to our God."[1] Brigham Young must have had a clearer understanding of the principle when he said:

> "I would rather be chopped to pieces and resurrected in the morning, each day throughout a period of three score years and ten, than to be deprived of speaking freely, or be afraid of doing so."[2]

John Bunyan, a seventeenth century "reformer," being indicted for remaining away from Church, and attending other meetings, was sentenced thus:

> "Hear your judgment; you must be had back to prison, and there lie for three months following. And at three months end (he remained there for twelve years), if you do not submit to church to hear Divine service, and leave

1 Notes on Virginia Q.XVII, 1782. ME 2:221
2 Journal of Discourses 1:364.

> your preaching, you must be banished the realm; or be found to come back again without special license from the king, you must stretch by the neck for it, I tell you plainly. Jailer, take him away."

The victim's only comment was: "If I was out of prison today, I would preach again tomorrow, by the help of God."

The names of men like John Bunyan will live on and shine as beacon lights to guide the shambling foot-steps of faltering humanity; and that while dictators and kindred despots sink into their ignominious graves, there to lie as scornful and abandoned things, detested in life and mocked at in death.

We close this chapter of our thesis with the direct word of the Lord:

> "... That every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the MORAL AGENCY which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.
>
> Therefore, it is not right that any man should be in bondage (either physically or spiritually), one to another."[1]

1 D. & C. 101:78-79.

Apostasy

> "There is a mental attitude which is a bar against all information, which is a bar against all argument, and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance. That metal attitude is condemnation before investigation."

The Gospel is a perfect prescription for the attainment of Liberty. "Know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Knowledge, then, is the precursor of freedom. Indolence, ignorance, and sin mark the roads leading to bondage. Bondage invites dictatorship, and both are the fruits of apostasy.

"Ignorance," said Confucius, "is the night of the mind – a night without moon or stars."

Since, as Joseph Smith taught, men cannot be saved except as they obtain knowledge, it is imperative that men raise the shades of their mental windows and let the sunlight of truth in. To follow the threadstreams of truth wherever they lead, until they converge and flow as a single stream into the mighty ocean of knowledge, has its difficulties and even embarrassments to the stubborn or dogmatic mind, yet nothing less can lead to salvation – to freedom. There is no place in the celestial heavens for timid souls – souls that lack the courage of conviction. Sycophancy is the antithesis of courage. Cowardice is forever shut out from God's presence. "God will not have His work made manifest by cowards."[1]

This chapter of our thesis attempts to deal with apostasy as it effects both individual and the Church. The term "Apostasy" is often used by members of the Church with careless flippancy. Those declining to BLINDLY follow the present church leadership are dubbed apostates. They who insist on a scriptural background for their faith are, according to many, bordering on apostasy; and only apostates, it is contended by mental laggards and subservient minds, will contend for the teachings of the early leaders of the Church, including the Prophet Joseph Smith, as against those of the present leaders. To question in the slightest degree the actions or teachings of the

1 Ralph Waldo Emerson.

leaders today, is, in the minds of some, apostasy, pure and simple. In order to avoid the stigma of apostasy, one must acknowledge as being right, and meekly submit to the dictation of men, rendering blind and fawning obedience.

What does the term apostasy really mean? The dictionaries give these definitions:

(a) "Desertion of one's faith, religion, party, or principle."

(b) "The abandonment of a religious faith which one has previously held or a church with which one has been previously connected."

These definitions, for the purpose of this article, will be regarded as final. Then if one abandons a principle he once espoused, or a church or party he was once a member of, he has apostatized from that principle, church or party. This is true either of one individual or a group of individuals. Let a church organization repudiate a principle it once accepted as Divine and, in so far as that principle is concerned, it becomes an apostate church. Conversely, if an individual ceases not to believe in and sustain a principle, church or party once espoused, he is NOT an apostate, although all the other members of his group may call him such.

Examples: Abraham, when he refused to worship his father's idols was regarded an apostate by those who worshiped idols, notwithstanding he adhered closely to the command, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Jesus Christ was rejected and crucified as an apostate, by the apostate Jews because he insisted on the fulfillment of all the law.

Joseph Smith was martyred by those who claimed him to be an apostate, although he advanced no doctrine not in perfect harmony with the scriptures.

The victim in either case had not apostatized, while it is entirely clear that his persecutors had done so. It was the apostate Sanhedrin that encompassed the death of the Savior. Nor should the Saints be blinded to the fact that group apostasy may be expected from age to age. It seems to be the disposition

of men to regard their own acts as orthodox while they moralize on the awful state of others who, in past ages, have strayed from the truth. The argument is erroneously and too often used, that as the world, customs, economies, etc., change, so the laws of the Gospel must change to harmonize. But such is a false premise. True, customs change with time, but eternal laws never; the very term "eternal" implies unchangeableness. Baptism by immersion was the law in Father Adam's day, in the day of Jesus Christ, and it is the law of heaven today. Men have been lead to change both the purpose and the form, and modern church institutions sustain such changes, but the law remains, and complete salvation can be had in no other way.

When the Church was organized communicants who had submitted to a form of baptism in other churches, wanted such baptisms to suffice; but the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith the error in their request, for not only the form of baptism but the authority to perform it is specifically prescribed by eternal law and must be fully adhered to.[1]

1 See D. & C. 22:2.

Unchangeableness of Law

That the Lord himself is governed by law must be patent to all thinking minds, otherwise there would be changeableness. "There is a law, IRREVOCABLY decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world," said Joseph Smith, "upon which all blessings are predicated; and when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated."

So absolute is this principle of unchangeableness, that when the oppressed Saints petitioned their leaders for a revocation of the law of Celestial marriage, the question being put to the Lord elicited this reply:

> "How can I revoke an everlasting covenant, for I the Lord am everlasting and my everlasting covenants CANNOT be abrogated nor done away with, but they STAND FOREVER. ... I, the Lord, DO NOT change, and my word and my covenants and my law do not. ... I have not revoked this law, NOR WILL I, for it is everlasting, and those who will enter into my glory MUST obey the conditions thereof."[1]

This is a specific and conclusive example of the unchangeableness of eternal laws. This unalterable condition of the law, however, must not be confused with customs established by the servants of the Lord to assist in carrying out the demands of the law. Because Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan does not imply that every person must be baptized in that river, or in any river; they are to be baptized in water – by immersion, by one duly authorized to do so. The monthly fast-day as observed by the Church, is an institution established to assist the Saints in carrying out the eternal laws of heaven; its establishment was not based on eternal law. The Saints first met on Thursday. As customs changed and it appeared to the proper authorities that the convenience of the Saints and the purpose of the day, could best be served by changing from Thursday to Sunday, such change was made – and properly so. Fast-day observance is a means to

1 Revelation of 1886.

an end; blessings resulting from the LAW'S observance is the end. The means may change to better enable the living of the law, but the law – eternal law – never changes.

Elaborating further upon this point of the unchangeableness of eternal law, President John Taylor said:

> "Permit me to say there are eternal laws that exist with the Gods in the eternal worlds, and from which they CANNOT DEPART, and to which they ARE BOUND in all their acts; I was going to say as we are; but I will say not as we are, but as we ought to be, subject to the law of God in all our acts, and that it is absolutely necessary that men should be placed in a state of trial, in a state of probation. ..."[1]

1 Deseret News, Feb, 14, 1880.

Former Apostasies

Returning then to the point of the periodical group apostasies from the laws of God, and which are noted in history, almost from the dawn of creation. A clear case in point is that of the children of Israel, during their exodus from Egypt. It is recorded that in the third month after the exodus began, the Lord confided in Moses His designs with reference to the Israelites. He said:

> "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.
>
> Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:
>
> And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."[1]

Moses laid these matters before the people with the result:

> "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord."[2]

Here then, the children of Israel espoused a principle under a most sacred covenant to obey the same. Obedience meant the creation of a "KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, AND AN HOLY NATION." It would seem that a greater blessing could not be hoped for, and as God's covenant could not be abrogated, all hinged on the constancy of the Israelites. The Lord had given Moses a priesthood which was available to the Israelites, and through obedience to which they could "see the face of God, even the Father, and live." Moses taught this to the people, "and sought diligently to sanctify them that they might behold the face of God," as Moses himself had done.[3]

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1 Exodus 19:4-6.
2 Ibid 8.
3 See D. & C. 84:22-23, Exodus 34:11.

What could have been more desirable? And yet when put to the test, the Israelites faltered and apostatized; for, at the first demonstration of the power of God, instead of showing an eagerness to see Him and converse with Him, which it was their right to do, if obedient, the record states:

> "They removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die."[1]

They had espoused a cause, made a promise; and then, through lack of courage and stability, they apostatized.

It is stated that as early as the year A. D. 60, even while some of the Apostles were still alive and active, a "falling away" commenced among the ancient Saints, and this "falling away" progressed, finally ending in a universal departure from the faith, and the Church was driven into the wilderness. On this point Elder Orson Pratt said:

> "The great apostasy of the Christian church commenced in the first century, while there were yet inspired apostles and prophets in their midst, hence Paul, just previous to his martyrdom, enumerates a great number who had "made shipwreck of their faith," and "turned aside unto vain jangling", teaching "that the resurrection was already past", giving "heed to fables and endless genealogies," "doubt about questions and strifes of words whereof came envyings, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness." This apostasy had become so general that Paul declares to Timothy, "that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me", and again he says, "at my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me"; he further states that "there are many unruly, and vain talkers, deceivers," "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." These apostates, no doubt, pretended to be very righteous; "for," says the apostle, "they profess that they know God;

1 Exodus 20:18.

but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."[1]

In the Nephite history numerous mass apostasies took place among the Saints. As long as they were being persecuted by their enemies, they were humble and obedient, but so soon as ease and comforts came to them, and they mixed with the enemy, they began their downward course. After the awful cataclysm in nature, following the crucifixion of the Savior, and the personal administration of the Lord among them, they remained faithful for some two hundred years, before a definite "falling away" or apostasy began to take form. But the apostasy came with that same rigid precision characterizing previous apostasies.

And so in the present dispensation, from the life of the Prophet, Joseph Smith down, the Saints were repeatedly warned against the sin of apostasy.

It will be remembered that the "falling away" from the truth is seldom, if ever, a sudden act; it is usually a very gradual process. A detour from the main road may be ever so slight to begin with, yet in time it leads so far away as to render it impossible to get back without assistance. One of the present leaders of the Church, a year or so ago, stated the Church had gone off on a slight detour, but it would soon get back to the main road again. It is such "slight detours" that has caused a universal forsaking of the Gospel in times past. "Slight detours" are seldom corrected until after the mischief has been accomplished. "I want to say also," remarked Elder John A. Widtsoe, of the Quorum of Twelve, "that it is my conviction that the greatest danger that may affect this Church at any time is to depart, EVER SO LITTLE, from these fundamental principles. All that we do, all that we plan to do, MUST be tied to the fundamental principles of the Gospel."[2]

The simple change in the form of baptism, in the former day church is an example.

As before mentioned, many claim the right to change the laws of God in accordance with changing customs and conditions. It was said to be early in the third century when the

1 Outlines of Ecclesiastical History-Roberts, 171.
2 Conference Report, April, 1921, p. 37.

form of baptism began to be changed. One of the first circumstances of such innovation is related by the late B. H. Roberts, as follows:

> "But in the first half of the third century, Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, during a controversy respecting the re-baptism of those who in times of persecution had denied the faith, decided that those whose weak state of health did not permit them to be immersed, were sufficiently baptized by being sprinkled."[1]

Thus in a perfectly natural way the form of baptism began to be changed to meet "changing conditions," from immersion to sprinkling, a common form now employed by the Roman Catholics and other denominations. And as the form changed, so also did the purpose. Baptism was instituted for the remission of sins and logically was intended for those only who were capable of committing sin. In the latter part of the second or early in the third century, the custom of baptizing infants was in vogue. Thus one step in departure from the original faith lead to another, until the church became more pagan than Christian, and merited the opprobrium of being corrupt that their professors "draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, HAVING a FORM of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."

So much, then, on the course of apostasy in the former churches. And let us observe here that men are little different today than they were in those times so far as concerns their stability in religious thought. Under the pelting blows of the Prince of Darkness, they are as the shifting sands before the desert winds. Cause and effect are much the same in all ages. And, too, in considering the "falling away" of the Saints in this day it must be remembered that the blame is not attributable to their present leaders except in proportion as their acts encourage such a situation. A "falling away" began in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. There have been ebbs and flows in the tide of apostasy since the great "falling away" in Kirtland in 1837-8. However, since the adoption of the Manifesto, the

1 Outlines Of Ecclesiastical History 147.

momentum has increased until today the teachings of the Church have too little in common with those of an earlier day.

Latter-day Apostasies

A "falling away" in this day was clearly predicted by the early prophets. Paul said:

> "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, strewing himself that he is God."[1]

Let us not be deceived with the notion that this "falling away" had reference to the early day Saints, for it was to be in a temple building day that the "son of perdition" shall sit as "God" in the "temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." It is this day that Paul referred to as the "last days," when perilous times should come, said he:

> "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn way."[2]

How well the apostle's description fits present conditions, both in the Church and out! The Saints today, quite as completely as non-Mormons, by reason of surrendering much of the Gospel as taught by Joseph Smith, have only "a form of godliness," and they are daily "denying the power thereof." It is in this day that the Prophet Isaiah referred to:

"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof;

1 II Thessalonians 2:3-4.
2 II Timothy 3:2-5.

> because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."[1]

It is this people to whom the "laws" have been given in the "last days"; who have been made guardians of the "ordinances," and been initiated into the "everlasting covenant". No other people since the former day church lost the Priesthood, have had sufficient knowledge to "transgress the laws, change the ordinance, and break the everlasting Covenant." The "law" was restored to this people; the "ordinance" was given them and they entered into the "everlasting covenant" with the Lord. The Prophet Nephi, in speaking of this people and day, said:

> "For behold, at that day, shall he (Satan) rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good. (The hearts of the Latter-day Saints today are stirred up against the principle of Patriarchal marriage – a "good" principle, a saving principle.) And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion: yea, Zion prospereth, all is well – and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away CAREFULLY down to hell."[2]

We need not rely entirely on the word of the ancient prophets for this information. Warnings have come from the Lord time and again, through His modern servants. Joseph Smith indicated the instability of the Saints when he said:

> "Would to God, brethren, I could tell you who I am! Would to God I could tell you what I know! But you would call it blasphemy, and there are men upon this stand who would want to take my life."[3]

Later, August 6, 1842, Joseph stated:

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1 Isaiah 24:5.
2 2 Nephi 28:20-21.
3 Quoted in Orson F. Whitney, Life of Heber C. Kimball, p. 322 (1945 ed).

"I prophesied that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction, and would be driven to the Rocky mountains, and many would APOSTATIZE, others would be put to death by our persecutors, or lose their lives in consequence of exposure or disease, and some of you will live to go and assist in making settlements and building cities and see the Saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky mountains."[1]

Brigham Young said:

"When the spirit of persecution, the spirit of hatred, of wrath, and malice ceases in the world against this people, it will be the time that this people have APOSTATIZED and joined hands with the wicked, and NEVER until then."[2]

And again:

"The Lord gave a revelation through Joseph Smith, His servant; and we have believed and practiced it. Now, then, it is said that this must be done away before we are permitted to receive our place as a state in the union ... Do you think that we shall ever be admitted as a state into the union without denying the principle of polygamy? If we are not admitted until then we shall NEVER be admitted."[3] (The Church has denied polygamy, calling it a non-essential, and has proclaimed monogamy, when performed in the temples, the essence of Celestial marriage, AND WE HAVE STATEHOOD.

President John Taylor, at Centerville, September 27, 1886, while instructing the Priesthood with reference to the Patriarchal order of marriage, said: "The time would come when many of the Saints would APOSTATIZE because of the principle" of plural marriage. He said, "One half of this people will

1 Truth Magazine 2:103.
2 Discourses of Brigham Young 171-2.
3 Journal of Discourses 11:269.

APOSTATIZE over the principle for which we are now in hiding, (polygamy) yea, and possibly one-half of the other half." He also said, "The day will come when a document would be adopted by the Church" discontinuing polygamy in the Church, "following which APOSTASY AND WHOREDOM would be rampant in the Church."

President Heber C. Kimball had previously stated:

> "You men and women that lift up your voices against that holy principle (plural marriage) that has been introduced among this people, the time will come when your daughters will walk these streets as common harlots, and you cannot help yourselves."[1]

Any adult Latter-day Saint with vision at all clear, knows that sexual laxity among L. D. S. children has become alarmingly prevalent since the adoption of the Woodruff Manifesto. Such facts have been proclaimed from the pulpits of the Church. (See J. Golden Kimball, October Conference, 1901, and M. F. Cowley, April Conference, 1902).

In the early days of the Church in Utah, the leaders frequently dwelt upon a "falling away" among the Saints, at which time there would be a group of faithful Saints chosen to carry the work on. As early as 1865, President Heber C. Kimball, speaking of the faithlessness of the saints said:

> "But the time will come when the Lord will choose a people OUT OF THIS PEOPLE, (the Latter-day Saints) upon whom He will bestow His choicest blessings."[2]

In the year 1875, Daniel H. Wells, of the First Presidency, said:

> "Many will doubtless make shipwreck of their faith, and will be led away by the allurements of sin into by and forbidden paths; yet the kingdom will not be taken from

1 As quoted by J. Golden Kimball, Conference Report, October 1901, p.32.
2 Deseret News, Nov. 9, 1865.

this people and given to another, but a PEOPLE WILL COME FORTH FROM AMONG US, (from among the Latter-day Saints) who will be zealous of good works, willing to do the bidding of the Lord who will be taught in His ways, and who will walk in His paths."[1]

On October 6, 1882, President Wells reiterated the above in these words:

> "And if we, as a people, do not hold ourselves on the altar ready to be used, with our means and ALL that God has bestowed upon us, according to the Master's bidding, for the upholding of His kingdom upon the earth, He will pass on and get somebody else, because he will get a people that will do it. I do not mean to say that He will pass on and leave this people; no, THERE WILL COME UP FROM THE MIDST OF THIS PEOPLE THAT PEOPLE WHICH HAS BEEN TALKED SO MUCH ABOUT, for the kingdom will not be taken from us and given to another people; it is too late in the day, as it has already commenced to grow, and it is growing and will continue to grow."[2]

In the same year the Church published this statement in the Millennial Star:

> "Before the great day of the Lord shall come and the day of righteousness and peace dawn upon this fair creation, two potent cleansing processes shall be in active operation. The first of these is the preparation of a choice people, purified by an application to their lives, as individuals and a community, of the principles of the gospel of peace. Such a body will EVOLVE FROM THOSE CALLED LATTER-DAY SAINTS, who, as a Church, possess the fulness and power of the pure plan of Salvation. Out of this community, at present in the merely incipient stages of development, and from the remnant of

1 Truth Magazine 1:134.
2 Deseret News, Dec. 9, 1882.

> the whole House of Israel, will emanate the NUCLEUS OR FOUNDATION from which will spring the righteous millennial population of our globe."[1]

In 1885 the Deseret News treated editorially the desire of many of the Saints that the Church surrender the Patriarchal order of marriage, from which we quote:

> "What would be necessary to bring about the result nearest the hearts of the opponents of "Mormonism," more properly termed the Gospel of the Son of God? Simply to renounce, abrogate or apostatize from the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage in its fulness. Were the Church to do that as an entirety, God would reject the Saints as a body. The authority of the Priesthood would be withdrawn, with its gifts and powers, and there would be no more heavenly recognition of the administrations among the people; the heavens would permanently withdraw themselves, and the Lord would RAISE UP ANOTHER PEOPLE of greater valor and stability, for His work MUST, according to His unalterable decrees, GO FORWARD, for the time of the second coming of the Savior is near, even at the doors."[2]

The above references will suffice to show that a "falling away" from the principles of the Gospel was expected by the leaders of this people. History has not recorded a truer picture than the present situation presents in fulfillment of the predictions set forth, – each prophesy with uncanny exactness.

Having shown the tendency of the Saints in all ages to apostatize from the truths of the Gospel; also how the latter-day leaders of Israel warned the Saints time and again, predicting apostasies among them, we will proceed to point out a few instances of these present day apostasies and their result on the morale of the Church. And again it will be seen that history repeats itself in the fact that apostasy first begins with the people,

1 Millennial Star 42:584.

2 Deseret News, April 23, 1885. (Also see Mill. Star, 44:312-314. Truth Magazine 2:156.)

spreading from a few to many, until the Church as a body officially adopts the actions of its members.

That the Saints were prone to sin is indicated by the frequent chastisements administered by the Lord. In April, 1832, the Lord revealed:

> "Nevertheless there are those among you who have sinned exceedingly; yea, even all of you have sinned, but verily I say unto you beware from henceforth, and refrain from sin, lest sore judgments fall upon your heads."[1]

In September of the same year the Lord, speaking of the vanity and unbelief of the Saints, said:

> "Which vanity and unbelief hath brought the WHOLE CHURCH under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, EVEN ALL."[2]

And in June, 1833, the Lord told the Saints through His Prophet:

> "For ye have sinned against me a very grievous sin, in that ye have not considered the great commandment in all things, that I have given unto you concerning the building of mine house, for the preparation wherewith I design to prepare mine apostles to prune my vineyard for the last time, that I may bring to pass my strange act, that I may pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.
>
> But behold, verily I say unto you, that there are many who have been ordained among you whom I HAVE CALLED, but few of them are chosen; they who are not chosen have sinned a very grievous Sin, in that they are walking in darkness at noon-day; ..."[3]

As early as 1862 President Brigham Young lamented the fact that there was not a fully organized branch or ward in the

1 D.& C. 82:2.
2 Ibid 84:55-56.
3 Ibid 95:3-6.

Church; and this, because the Saints were, in consequence of their lack of obedience and of their ignorance, incapable of being organized.[1] On another occasion President Young said:

> "I have had visions and revelations instructing me how to organize this people so that they can live like the family of heaven, but I cannot do it while so much selfishness and wickedness reign in the Elders of Israel. Many would make of the greatest blessings a curse to them. ... How long it will be before they are prepared to enjoy the blessings God has in store for them, I know not – it has not been revealed to me. I know the Lord wants to pour blessings upon this people, but were He to do so in their present ignorance, they would not know what to do with them. They can receive only a very little, and that must be administered to them with great care. ..."[2]

Previous to this – in 1837 – an almost universal apostasy took place among the Saints at Kirtland, because of financial reverses coming to institutions in which the Prophet was interested. At this time, it is related, Brigham Young was compelled to leave Kirtland by night to escape being killed by the mob – members of the Church. His offense was proclaiming Joseph Smith a Prophet of God; and Heber C. Kimball said there were not twenty at Kirtland who would testify that Joseph was a Prophet. The Lord had appointed Sept. 11, 1836, as the date on which Zion (in Missouri) should be redeemed, provided the Saints would obey the Priesthood.[3] Their failure to thus obey the Priesthood continued the curse of bondage on Zion. It was the apostate Laws, Higbee, Foster, and others, who were responsible for the death of Joseph and Hyrum and the abandonment of Nauvoo by the Saints.

Arriving in the mountains, a general reformation took place among the Saints, most of them renewing their covenants in Baptism. In 1852 the Saints accepted, by vote, the Patriarchal law of marriage, but ten years had not elapsed before many of

1 See Journal of Discourses 10:20.
2 Journal of Discourses 9:269-70.
3 See History of Church, 2:115-6.

them were urging the suspension or abrogation of the law, to avoid complications with the Government. Hostility against the law increased until in 1887 a large group of Saints petitioned the Government for statehood, promising to repudiate the Celestial marriage law and cease to live it; and in 1890 the Saints almost unanimously voted to suspend the "law of the Priesthood" by adopting the Woodruff Manifesto. Almost to a man, the Saints apostatized from this great law of marriage, as Brigham Young said they would do before being granted statehood.

It is, of course, contended that while the Church acted upon a suspension of the law, it has not drawn away from a belief in the principle. This, however, is not true as we have shown. For Plural marriage has been officially proclaimed to be "an incident, NEVER AN ESSENTIAL," by the late Dr. James E. Talmage and Melvin J. Ballard, of the Quorum of Twelve, and by the combined presiding quorums of the Church in their "Official Statement" of June 17, 1933.

The economic law of heaven – the United Order – having been revealed through Joseph Smith, failed of its purpose in Missouri, finally resulting in the Saints being driven to the mountains. In 1874 the servants of the Lord made another effort to have the Saints live the law. Organizations were effected in different communities but, owing to the selfishness and jealousies of the Saints the movement failed and the Saints apostatized from that principle or law.

The two laws – the "United Order" and the "Order of Plural Marriage" – were proclaimed by the Prophet Brigham Young as constituting the fulness of the Gospel. To reject them meant rejection of the Gospel and a general weakening of the ecclesiastical structure all along the line. As the people repudiated what to them were objectionable features of the Gospel, the Church as an organization, gradually fell into line until the repudiation of the Gospel plan has become the official position of the Church, as we will show in succeeding articles.

Areas Of Apostasy

> "For it shall come to pass that the inhabitants of Zion shall judge all things pertaining to Zion;
>
> And liars and hypocrites shall be proved by them, and they who are not apostles and prophets shall be known.
>
> And even the Bishop, who is a judge, and his counselors, if they are not faithful in their stewardships, shall be condemned, and others shall be planted in their stead."[1]

Having shown in previous chapters the general condition of apostasy among the Saints and on the part of the Church as an organization, it will now be our task to show wherein certain leading principles of the Gospel are affected by this state of apostasy.

1 D. & C. 64:38-40.

United Order

This is the economic law of heaven. It embraces the laws of Tithing and Consecration. Little has been said of late concerning the United Order, but a Church Security Plan has been inaugurated for the economic relief of the Saints, bearing little or no resemblance to the order revealed from heaven. The law of tithing, as stated, comprehends consecration, and the whole economic law contemplates a oneness of purpose.

> "That the poor may be exalted, in that the rich are made low; (or reduced to a fair basis) for the earth is full and there is enough and to spare; ...
>
> Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impair not his portion (the surplus first and then tithing) according to the law of my Gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment."[1]

The purpose in the law is to make men equal and provide for their "just wants and needs."

> "Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, ..."[2]

> "And you are to be equal, or in other words, you are to have equal claims on the properties, ... every man according to his wants and needs, inasmuch as his wants are just. ... Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God. This order I have appointed to be an EVERLASTING ORDER unto you."[3]

The order is designated as a "United Order, and an EVERLASTING ORDER for the benefit of my Church, and for

1 D. & C. 104:16-18.
2 Ibid 70:14; 78:5, 6; 51:3, 9.
3 Ibid 82:17, 19, 20.

the salvation of men until I come."[1]

It is a perpetual Order. As to the Law of Tithing, the Lord said:

> "I require all their SURPLUS property to be put into the hands of the Bishop of my Church in Zion, ... And this shall be the BEGINNING of the tithing of my people.
>
> And after that, those who have thus been tithed shall pay one tenth of their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them FOREVER, for my holy Priesthood, saith the Lord."[2]

It is clear that this economic order of heaven is, to a large degree, being ignored. For instance, we know of no person in this day being required to pay into the Church the SURPLUS of his property; and it is evident that very little semblance of economic equality exists among the Saints. There seems to be one law or rule for the rich and another for the poor. The leaders receive their salaries or allowances in cash, while the poor, those coming under the operations of the "Church Security Plan", are not only given wages, which are in many instances, wholly inadequate for their household needs, but these wages are paid in orders for produce, etc., and often times we are informed, cannot be used advantageously. To be equal in spirit and in fact, all receiving Church support, including the General Authorities, should be paid in like coin, in amount according to their "needs and just wants." The law of the Lord contemplates no discrimination. Hunger with the poor is as real as it can be with the rich; and the one class is as much entitled to food, clothing and comforts as is the other.

Under the present system, while there are a great many honest Latter-day Saints – and entirely worthy ones, living in at least, semi-poverty, are not many of the leaders, on Church pay, actually accumulating "surpluses" for their personal use and comforts? If this statement be doubted, one need only be reminded of the remarks of one of the General Authorities of the

1 Ibid 104:1.
2 Ibid 119:1, 3-4.

Church at the General Priesthood meeting a year ago, wherein he explained that the Lord had so blessed him that he was able at his death, to leave Each of his forty-seven grandchildren fifteen hundred dollars.

Is not the $70,500.00 thus being held in reserve to be given grandchildren, who may in no sense be in need of it, and who have done nothing to earn it, a "surplus" that the Lord requires? And are there not many like "surpluses" scattered among the more wealthy of the leading brethren in the Church, that, if paid into the Church, and properly distributed, would make for Utopia, and tend to fuse the spirit of brotherhood between the leaders and the laity?

At any rate, does not the present attitude of the leaders toward the economic law of God, reflect a failure of the people to put into effect this law of the Gospel?

The Gospel Propaganda System

Church leaders boast much of the missionary system now in vogue, while pursuing a course diametrically opposite that which the Lord commands. Example:

> "Therefore, let no man among you, (for this commandment is unto all the faithful who are called of God in the church unto the ministry) from THIS hour take PURSE OR SCRIP, that goeth forth to proclaim this gospel of the kingdom.
>
> Behold, I send you out to reprove the world or all their unrighteous deeds, and to teach them of a judgment which is to come.
>
> And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face: I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.
>
> Whoso receiveth you receiveth me, and the same will feed you, and clothe you and give you money.
>
> And he who feeds you, or clothes you, or gives you money, shall in no wise lose his reward:
>
> And he that doeth not these things is NOT my disciple; by this you may know my disciples.
>
> He that receiveth you not, go away from him alone by yourselves, and cleanse your feet even with water, pure water, whether in heat or in cold, and bear testimony of it unto your Father which is in heaven, and return not again unto that man."[1]

This was the law under which the apostles of old operated; "For," said the Savior, "I suffered them not to have purse or scrip, neither two coats; behold I send you out to prove the world, and the laborer is worthy of his hire."[2]

Under God's plan Elders go into the mission field depending entirely upon the Lord for guidance, sustenance and

1 D. & C. 84:86-92.
2 Ibid 78-79.

protection. This tends to keep them humble and better fitted to deliver their Master's message. The plan also enables men of special spiritual attainments, but who are not endowed with worldly wealth, to perform missions, whereas today such men, though eminently qualified, are denied the opportunity because of lack of means to meet their daily expenses. The present rule tends to place a premium on worldly riches, penalizing the lack of them. Under the Lord's plan Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, the Pratts, Heber C. Kimball and many others were instruments, contributing to the Church membership to the tune of scores of thousands, while under the present rule such men would be excluded from foreign mission work altogether.

Then, too, the Lord's system "proves the world," by giving them an opportunity to care for His servants, – "And he who feeds you, etc., shall in no wise lose his reward." "By this you may know my disciples." This is the Lord's way of proving men. To follow any other than the Lord's plan tends to defeat the purpose of missionary work; for it not only works a hardship on the Elders by depriving them of the richness of the Holy Ghost, but also an injustice to those being proselyted. The law of God, as set forth, remains unaltered, but the Church, through its actions and attitude has invalidated or suspended it, REQUIRING missionaries to be provided with monthly allowances, and that often times at an embarrassing sacrifice on the part of parents and loved ones at home. Missionaries in the field have even been told that unless they can have more money furnished them, they will be sent home before their missions are ended. The stock argument is that conditions have changed since the Savior announced that law, and men cannot comply with it today. And so the faithless sons of Lehi complained that it was fool-hardy to attempt to obtain the Jewish records from Laban, and wanted to give up the mission. But Nephi being built of sterner stuff, said: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save He shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which He commandeth them."[1] And he did what to the present unbelieving Saints would seem impossible.

Who among the missionaries today is carrying out the

1 1 Nephi 3:7.

Lord's instructions to go without "purse or scrip", depending upon the people, under His inspiration, for food and clothing, thereby proving themselves the Lord's disciples, who cleanse their feet in testimony against the unbeliever and who has the presence of the Lord to be with them on the "right hand and on the left", with His Spirit in their hearts, and His angels round about them, to bear them up? We fear but few, if any. Certainly the Lord is bound to bless the faithful among the missionaries who, because of the present attitude of the Church, are disregarding the law of God in their work, but how much more successful they might be, were they strictly following the Lord's plan!

God has not changed His law pertaining to missionary work. There are special advantages in the Lord's system, The experience of the early Elders confirms this fact. Heber C. Kimball tells of the time he and Brigham Young started with $16.60 to travel 500 miles. They paid out $82.00 and had money left at the end of their journey, and they had no visible knowledge of where the money came from. John Taylor landed in New York, on his way to Europe, with only a penny, plus faith in God. He reached his destination in good time. President Kimball said:

> "Do you suppose that we believe in angels and holy beings having visited us on those occasions, (when they were traveling without purse and scrip)? Cannot angels furnish saints with money? Our wants were supplied, and we are witnesses of the fact, ..."[1]

The Deseret News of August 18, 1900, records a statement of George Q. Cannon deprecating the habit the missionaries had contracted of having money sent them in their missionary work. He said:

> "I was presiding in Europe in 1860-64. Money at that time became more plentiful in this country, and some of the Elders over there began to receive funds from their parents, with which they might travel and see Europe. By degrees this fashion has grown up, until now it is almost

1 Journal of Discourses 4:1.

> universal. Well, I do not believe in it. Up to that time we all preached the Gospel without purse or scrip, and you know how successful the work was. That fashion (of receiving money from home) ... had a demoralizing effect upon the Elders of this Church. ... Why should a man exercise faith for the Lord to provide him with friends to entertain him when he had plenty of money in his pockets? Why should he follow the method the Lord set forth, and do as He commanded, when he was independent as to whether the people would receive him or not?"

President Joseph F. Smith sounded the same warning in 1897, strongly criticising the tendency in that day to discard the Lord's plan.[1]

Surely the leaders will not contend today that the Lord is incapable of caring for the Elders as He did in the early days of the Church. Surely the Lord would not send Elders into the world on His business, promising them food, clothing and expense money, and then admit His inability to comply with His part of the agreement.

Then, in its missionary policy, has not the Church departed from this law of the Gospel?

1 See Truth Magazine, 2:144.

Gathering

John the Revelator relates that he saw an "angel come down from heaven," crying "mightily with a strong voice," saying:

> "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.
>
> And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.
>
> For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."[1]

The Lord had promised through His servant Moses, that Israel should some day be gathered.[2] And through His Prophet Nehemiah, the Lord promised that:

> "If ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there."[3]

The universality of the gathering is thus assured. Gathered to what place? We speak now more particularly of the gathering of Ephraim, whose day it now is. Isaiah saw in the last days (this day) that "The Mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains."[4] The "Mountain of the Lord's house," must have reference to the headquarters of the Lord's house, His principle place of business in the land of Joseph.

Why the gathering? That the Saints may be taught, purified and prepared to meet their God. To do this they must

1 Revelations 18:2, 4-5.
2 See Deuteronomy 30:4.
3 Nehemiah 1:9.
4 Isaiah 2:2.

"come out of Babylon," the "habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit." etc., and he in an environment suited for such training. Brigham Young said:

> "We have gathered to the valleys of these mountains for the express purpose of purifying ourselves, that we may become polished stones in the temple of God. We are here for the purpose of establishing the Kingdom of God on the earth. To be prepared for this work it has been necessary to gather us out from the nations and countries of the world, for if we had remained in those lands we could not have received the ordinances of the holy Priesthood of the Son of God, which are necessary for the perfection of the Saints preparatory to His coming."[1]

So important is the gathering that Joseph Smith commented thus:

> "Then, if this is the case, and if we are not sanctified and gathered to the places God has appointed, with all our former professions and our great love for the Bible, we must fall; we cannot stand, we cannot be saved, for God will gather out His Saints from the Gentiles, and then comes desolation and destruction, and none can escape except the pure in heart who are gathered."[2]

And finally, the Lord commanded the gathering in this dispensation. September, 1830, shortly after the Church was organized, the Lord told Joseph Smith:

> "And ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect, for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts, wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father, that they shall be GATHERED IN UNTO ONE PLACE upon the face of this land, to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the

1 Discourses of Brigham Young 186.
2 History of Church 2:52.

wicked; ..."[3]

Much attention was given this important requirement from the Lord in the early history of the Church, and thousands of the descendants of Ephraim were gathered to the "Mountain of the Lord's house" here in the "tops of the mountains." But today, and such has been the case for many years, Israel is scattering rather than gathering. The Saints are not only encouraged to leave the mountains, but those born abroad are being instructed to remain in their native lands, both in America and in other parts of the earth, described by the Revelator as the "habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

Of course the brethren will explain that times have changed; emigration laws, etc., render it necessary for the Saints to remain in Babylon. But by what force of circumstances have conditions changed? As long as the Saints in the mountains were living their religion, there was little trouble from emigration laws; the honest in heart gathered to Zion. We have the experience of the Mexican Saints. Being persecuted in the United States, they colonized in Mexico for the express purpose of living their religion. The Lord, in His mercy, prepared the hearts of the Mexicans to receive the Saints and not molest them. They were welcomed into that land of the Lamanites, and given every protection and were treated with wonderful consideration.

This condition continued as long as the Saints were steadfast in living God's laws, chief among them being the order of Plural Marriage. Even after the Manifesto to Wilford Woodruff was issued, arrangements were made to continue the practice of polygamy in Mexico. No trouble came to the Saints from the Mexicans UNTIL THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH sought to have the practice discontinued in that land, and began, as was done under President Francis M. Lyman of the Twelve, and continued under the present regime, trying to "unchurch" those of the Saints who persisted in the practice. This led to internal jealousies, prejudices and animosities – Saints informing on Saints – the result being the withdrawing of Divine protection, an uprising of bandits in Mexico, the murdering of many of the

3 D. & C. 29:7-8.

Saints, and their final expulsion from the country. Now in the colonies of Mexico, a group of Saints, once valiant in upholding the marriage laws of God against the adversary's system – monogamy, and its attendant evil, have joined the world in fighting that sacred principle, and placing heavy burdens on the few faithful Saints remaining there. When the Saints rejected the law, God ceased to protect them from their enemies, and many of them, once filled with light, are now in gross darkness. And so here in this part of the mountains, the Saints having rejected the law have lost the distinctiveness formerly characterizing them, and the land is fast ceasing to be a Zion unto them. It may be argued that the Saints are better off in their native Babylon than they could be in this "Babylon", once known as Zion.

But when the plagues of destruction shall begin to strike with such a fury as to make men's hearts quake in fear, and no sanctuary is found, what can then be said in justification of the present policy of scattering and remaining scattered? Was it the Lord's design that the European Saints should remain in their native haunts, engage in the coming great wars and killing each other off? If so, where is the revelation instructing them to do this? The early policy of the Church was to gather the Saints out of Babylon and bring them to a land "flowing with milk and honey", where they would be free to worship God in truth. The Church has long since abandoned that policy and in this respect a distinct "falling away" is noted.

Temple Ordinances

Under the present leadership of the Church many vital changes have been made in the temple ordinance work. We will mention but one – the change in the Garment of the Holy Priesthood. *Truth Magazine* has previously devoted space to this subject (Vol. 1:33). In former years the "garment" was described as being the pattern of that which was placed on our first parents in the garden of Eden, after the fall, and the recipient was instructed to wear it continuously, taking it off only when bathing the body and to effect a change of linen. Because many of the leading sisters in the Church desired to dress in accordance with the foolish fads and fashions of Babylon, baring their backs and arms to the public, the Church leaders were induced to authorize a modified garment to be worn outside the temple, while the genuine pattern must continue to be worn while in the temple performing ordinance work.

Beginning with a more or less abbreviated pattern of this garment, successive changes have been made until today there is no essential similarity in the present garment and the original, excepting for certain markings. A recent advertisement in Z. C. M. I., a store, thought by many of the saints to be a Church institution, dated June 8, 1937, described the present "approved" garment for the sisters thus:

> "See the new L. D. S. Garment, four inch sleeve; side leg fastener. Snap shoulder fastener. Closed front and crotch. Brazier shaped top. APPROVED."

The whole flimsy thing could almost go into a thimble. The leaders defend their action with the statement that they can find no place where the garment as formerly used had the sanction of revelation. *Truth Magazine* has shown by the testimony of several, among them Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and Joseph F. Smith, that the garment, together with all other sacred temple ordinances, were revealed from heaven.[1] The one fact that the counterfeit is not permitted to be worn in the

1 See Truth Magazine, Vol. 2:33; 3:51.

temple, brands it as an outlaw and, in our opinion, the Saints would be better off to cease wearing any garment at all rather than to pollute the sacred vesture by discarding it for a "make believe." Present actions are breeders of hypocrisy.

The change in the garment was at first privileged, but it is now quite mandatory, so far as missionaries in the field are concerned. At a recent meeting of outgoing missionaries – young men and women – held in the Temple annex, a member of the Presidency is reported by an attendant at the meeting to have advised the missionaries to wear the "new style" garment, thus avoiding conspicuousness among the people of the world. He stated in substance that since the Church has approved the "slit in the side style", the young lady missionaries can now live up to the fashions of the day; for, he said, such garments meet all the requirements of the day. He urged the sisters to be in style, and beautify themselves, so as to feel at ease in society. Both brethren and sisters were urged to avoid such conspicuousness as to elicit ridicule from outsiders, and this can best be accomplished, the speaker explained, by wearing the "new style garment." The speaker attributed his own freedom from ridicule while attending his toilet in the dressing rooms of pullman trains, during his extensive travels, to the fact of his adoption of the "new style" garment, and that is what he advised his audience to do. The advice of President McKay, not to be different from others, evidently took effect with some of the brethren; during their voyage across the water they are reported as having mingled freely with the other passengers, drinking, smoking and carousing with them, thus by following in the ways of Babylon, avoiding conspicuousness. Such follys as here related, and coming, too, from the leaders themselves, are almost unthinkable except from the key given by the Prophet Isaiah, "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and DESTROY THE WAY OF THY PATHS."[1]

Clearly with respect to certain temple ordinances, and particularly the Garments of the Holy Priesthood, the Church has abandoned the teachings of its former Presidents and is in a state of apostasy.

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1 Isaiah 3:12.

Celestial or Plural Marriage

All the leaders, including the present head of the Church, have taught that Celestial or Patriarchal marriage, embracing as an essential feature, the principle of plural marriage, was necessary to the highest exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom of God. Brigham Young's definition was the official position of the Church. He said:

> "It is the word of the Lord, and I wish to say to you, and all the world, that if you desire with all your hearts to obtain the blessings which Abraham obtained, you will be polygamists – at least in your faith, or you will come short of enjoying the salvation and the glory which Abraham has obtained. THIS IS AS TRUE AS THAT GOD LIVES. ... The ONLY MEN who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who ENTER INTO POLYGAMY. Others attain unto a glory and may even be permitted to come into the presence of the Father and the Son; but they CANNOT REIGN AS KINGS IN GLORY, because they had blessings offered unto them and they refused to accept them."[1]

The Prophet John Taylor expressed it this way:

> "Where did this commandment come from in relation to polygamy? It also came from God. It was a revelation given unto Joseph Smith from God, and was made binding upon His servants. When this system was first introduced among this people, it was one of the greatest crosses that ever was taken up by any set of men since the world stood. Joseph Smith told others; he told me, and I can bear witness to it, that if this principle was not introduced, this Church and Kingdom could not proceed. ...
>
> When I see any of our people, men or women, opposing a principle of this kind, I have years ago set

1 Journal of Discourses 11:268-9.

them down as on the road to apostasy, and I do today; I consider them apostates, and not interested in this Church and Kingdom."[1]

That the above was the Church interpretation under the former Presidents, is also seen from a petition of the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve to the President of the United States, dated December, 1891, and praying for Amnesty, from which we excerpt the following:

> "We, the First Presidency and Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, beg to respectfully represent to your Excellency the following facts:
>
> We formerly taught to our people that polygamy or Celestial marriage as commanded by God through Joseph Smith was right, that it was a NECESSITY to man's highest exaltation in the life to come."[2]

The late President Joseph F. Smith aided materially in clarifying this law. He said:

> "Some people have supposed that the doctrine of plural marriage was a sort of superfluity or non-essential to the salvation of mankind. In other words, some of the Saints have said and believe that a man with one wife, sealed to him by the authority of the Priesthood for time and eternity, will receive an exaltation as great and glorious, if he is faithful, as he possibly could with more than one. I wish here to enter my solemn protest against this idea, for I KNOW IT IS FALSE. ... The marriage of one woman to a man for time and eternity by the sealing power, according to the law of God is a fulfillment of the Celestial law of marriage in part. ... But this is only the beginning of the law, NOT THE WHOLE OF IT. Therefore, whoever has imagined that he could obtain the fulness of the blessing, pertaining to this Celestial law, by complying with only a portion of its conditions, has

1 Journal of Discourses 11:216.
2 Smoot Investigation, Vol. 1:18.

> deceived himself. He cannot do it. ... I understand the law of Celestial marriage to mean that every man in this Church who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness, and will not, SHALL BE DAMNED. I say I understand it to mean this and nothing less, and I TESTIFY IN THE NAME OF JESUS THAT IT DOES MEAN THAT. ..."[1]

So much for the meaning of the law. The official position of the Church now is, as expressed by the late Dr. James E. Talmage, then a member of the Quorum of Twelve:

> "That plural marriage is a vital tenet of the Church is not true. What the Latter-day Saints call Celestial marriage is characteristic of the Church, and is in very general practice, but of Celestial marriage, plurality of wives WAS AN INCIDENT, NEVER AN ESSENTIAL."[2]

Elder Melvin J. Ballard, of the Quorum of Twelve, under date of July 21, 1934, made this statement:

> "I grant you that there have been those in the past, including some of the leaders of the Church, who have in times of stress urged the brethren to enter into plural marriage and have left the inference that plural marriage was the only marriage that would obtain in the highest degree of Celestial Glory. But there is nothing in the revelation nor in the actions and decisions of the Church itself that justifies that position."

Continuing, Elder Ballard states as the advantage in entering into plural marriage, "Because of having more than one wife they are able to BUILD FASTER toward the glory of their own kingdom."[3]

The positions assumed by Elders Talmage and Ballard are upheld by the Church in its "Official Statement" of June 17,

1 Journal of Discourses 20:26-31.
2 Story of Mormonism, Talmage, 86.
3 Marriage, Ballard-Jenson Correspondence, pp 10-11.

1933, from which we quote on page 19:

> "Celestial marriage – that is, marriage for time and eternity – and polygamous or plural marriage are not synonymous terms. MONOGAMOUS marriages for time and eternity, solemnized in our temples in accordance with the Word of the Lord and the laws of the Church, are Celestial marriages."

It is clear from these statements that the present position of the Church is diametrically opposite that taken by Brigham Young, John Taylor and Joseph F. Smith; and we might have quoted Joseph Smith and scores of other leading brethren, who received their information from the Prophet himself, as well as by direct revelation from the Lord.

Neither the meaning nor the purpose of the law has changed. But the present leaders of Ephraim have wandered so far astray that they are actually persecuting those who believe in and teach the principle as Joseph Smith and his associates taught it; the present leader going so far as to state over his signature, "I shall rejoice when the Government officials put a few of these (Saints living in plural marriage) in the county jail or the state penitentiary." And through his assistance, as reported by his associates, several of the Saints have been arrested for living the principle of plural marriage that Joseph Smith taught, three of them – two brethren and one sister (the mother of five children) were sentenced to serve time in the state penitentiary at Florence, Arizona. And this leader, mind you, has acknowledged time and time again, in the pulpit and in a court of law, that he was living the same principle and intended to continue doing so!

Thus it will be seen that the Church has "fallen away" from the principle of Celestial marriage as revealed by the Lord.

Priesthood

Priesthood is the power by which God rules the world. It is the agency, through obedience to which, man may regain the presence of God, and become a joint heir with Him. It is the law, through the operations of which man may, in his mortal life, "see the face of God, even the Father, and live."

> "For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two Priesthoods of which I have spoken, (Aaronic and Melchisedek) and the magnifying their calling are sanctified by the spirit unto the renewing of their bodies;
>
> They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron, and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.
>
> And also all they who receive this Priesthood receiveth me, saith the Lord;
>
> For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;
>
> And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;
>
> And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto Him;
>
> And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the Priesthood.
>
> Therefore, all those who receive the Priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father which He CANNOT BREAK, neither can it be moved; ...
>
> And wo unto all those who come not unto this Priesthood which ye have received, (the Melchisedek Priesthood in its fulness) which I now confirm upon you who are present this day, by mine own voice out of the heavens, and even I have given the heavenly hosts and mine angels charge concerning you."[1]

From the above it will be seen how important the Priesthood is and how imperatively necessary it is that men not only possess it but that they also magnify it. Without the

1 D. & C. 84:33-42.

Priesthood it will be impossible to go where God is. The early leaders of the Church were careful, not only in teaching the sacredness of the Priesthood, but also in conferring it upon worthy Saints. After the issuance of the Woodruff Manifesto, purporting to discontinue the living of the principle of Patriarchal marriage, efforts were made by certain leaders in the Church to change the method of conferring Priesthood. The former method that perpetuated by the early leaders as coming from John the Baptist, and from Peter, James and John, of first conferring the Priesthood and then ordaining the candidate to the office in which he must function, was attempted to be changed so that the recipient should only receive the office, with such PORTION of the Priesthood as might function in the office. The fallacious idea was advanced that a man could receive a portion or fragment of the Priesthood; or in other words, that each branch of the Priesthood was divisible.

It is understood that this idea gained the ascendancy under the Presidency of Lorenzo Snow; and a few, it is reported, were ordained to an office in the Church without being given the Priesthood to which such office belonged. However, in justice to President Snow we should say that this action was probably taken without his knowledge or consent; for some months before his counselor, Joseph F. Smith, then Editor in chief of the Improvement Era, published the following instructions:

Conferring the Priesthood: The revelation in Section 107, Doctrine and Covenants[1], clearly points out that the Priesthood is a general authority or qualification, with certain offices or authorities appended thereto. Consequently, the conferring of the Priesthood should PRECEDE and ACCOMPANY ordination to office, UNLESS it be possessed by previous bestowal and ordination. Surely a man cannot possess an appendage to the Priesthood without possessing the Priesthood itself, which he CANNOT obtain unless it be authoritatively conferred upon him.

Take, for instance, the office of a deacon: the person ordained should have the Aaronic Priesthood conferred upon him in connection with its ordination. He cannot receive a portion or fragment of the Aaronic Priesthood, because that would be acting on the idea that either or both of the (Melchisedek and Aaronic)

1 Verses 1, 5, 6, 7, 21.

Priesthoods were subject to division, which is CONTRARY to the revelation.

In ordaining those who have not yet received the Aaronic Priesthood, to any office therein, the words of John the Baptist to Joseph Smith Jr., and Oliver Cowdery, would be appropriate to immediately precede the act of ordination. They are "Upon you my fellow servants (servant), in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron." Of course, it would not necessarily follow that these exact words should be used, but the language should be consistent with the act of conferring the Aaronic Priesthood."[1]

And again, President Smith stated:

> "There is no office growing out of this Priesthood that is or can be greater than the Priesthood itself. It is from the Priesthood that the office derives its authority and power. No office gives authority to the Priesthood. No office adds to the power of the Priesthood. But all offices in the Church derive their power, their virtue, their authority from the Priesthood."[2]

It will be observed that President Smith's first statement above (March 1901) was published while his predecessor in the Presidency, Lorenzo Snow, was yet alive, and it presumably had his sanction. The second statement was issued October, 1903, after the death of President Snow. The two statements are in perfect harmony.

We are informed that Joseph F. Smith once related that it had been revealed to him by mouth of his uncle Joseph Smith, the Prophet, that offices in the Priesthood, such as Deacon, Teacher, Priest, Elder, etc., were but appendages to the Priesthood, and that the Priesthood itself MUST be conferred before the office is given. Learning from his counselor, (Joseph F. Smith) of this revelation, President John Taylor said, "Of course that is the proper order"; i. e., to confer the Priesthood before ordaining to the office.

Upon the death of President Smith, November 1918, the agitation against the conferring of Priesthood was renewed, with

1 Improvement Era, 4:394, March, 1901. Also Gospel Doctrines, p. 169.
2 Gospel Doctrines, p. 184.

the result that an order was issued by the Church leadership, under which the office and not the Priesthood has since been conferred by those governed by such order. This new departure met with such determined opposition that the First Presidency, consisting of Heber J. Grant, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose, (the latter, it is understood, had engineered the change) added an "Addenda" to the Gospel Doctrine volume in which the teachings of Joseph F. Smith occur. This "Addenda" contains an alleged statement of President Smith reversing his former position as above given. It must be known in justice to the memory of President Smith that the "Addenda" act happened after his death. It was not included in the first edition of "Gospel Doctrines." It was evidently placed in the book as an after thought, to help minimize an embarrassing situation. The "Addenda" reads in part:

> "In reference to the form of procedure mentioned on page 169, and that set forth in this addendum as adopted by the leading authorities of the Church from the beginning, our beloved and departed President, Joseph F. Smith, when questioned concerning them, decided, AS OF RECORD, "It is a distinction without a difference", and "either will do."[1]

The "as of record" alibi seems not to exist; at least that is the word emanating from the office of Church Historian. Latter-day Saints in good standing have asked to see the "record" mentioned in the "Addenda", but it has not been produced, and they have been told, "No such record exists." The only logical conclusion is that there is no such "record", and that the "Addenda" mentioned, based perhaps on a half forgotten conversation had with the President, some years before his death, was fabricated after his death to appease the Saints. President Smith's statement which the "Addenda" attempts to contradict, was made in March, 1901, during the lifetime of President Lorenzo Snow, as shown. Evidently the conversation or "record" mentioned occurred near that time, because it had especial reference to that statement. It is well known that no change was

1 Gospel Doctrines, p. 686.

made in the manner of conferring Priesthood as a result of any such alleged conversation or "record", and none was made until after the death of President Smith. Had President Smith reversed himself, as the "Addenda" statement claims he did, surely some word of it would have leaked out to the Saints during the long years of his official career as President of the Church.

The "Addenda" states that the present method of ordaining, is that which was used by the "leading authorities of the Church from the beginning." There appears to be no foundation for this statement. After Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were given the Melchisedek Priesthood, they were told to ordain each other to the office of Elder. Says the Prophet:

> "The word of the Lord came unto us in the chamber (of Peter Whitmer), commanding us that I should ordain Oliver Cowdery to be an Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and that he also should ordain me to the same office."[1]

Thus, it is seen that the conferring of the Priesthood preceded the ordination to office. The instruction came direct from heaven. Surely the Lord knew the order of conferring Priesthood and office.

> "At a meeting held May 25, 1877, at Logan, President Brigham Young declared that in ordaining men to the office of seventy, the Prophet came to us "many times, saying, 'Brethren, you are going to ordain seventies. Do not forget to confer the HIGH PRIESTHOOD upon them. Ordain each of them to the High Priesthood, and to be one of the seventy apostles.'"[2]

That was Brigham Young's method of conferring the Priesthood and ordaining to office. This, too, was the method pursued in the mission field for many years prior to the present administration. In an "Elders Manual" issued over the signatures of eight mission presidents, during President Joseph F. Smith's

1 History of Church, 1:61.
2 Deseret News, June 6, 1877.

regime, these words were recommended to be used in such cases: "In the name of Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the Melchisedek Priesthood vested in us, we lay our hands upon your head and CONFER upon you the MELCHISEDEK PRIESTHOOD, and ORDAIN you an Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

President Smith's statement proclaims: "Surely a man cannot possess an appendage to the Priesthood without possessing the Priesthood itself, which he CANNOT obtain unless it is AUTHORITATIVELY CONFERRED UPON HIM." And herein lies a sad situation:

At the meeting held at Centerville, September 27, 1886, the day following the reception of the revelation by President John Taylor, wherein the Lord commanded the Saints to continue living plural marriage, among many other prophecies, President Taylor uttered the following:

> "I would be surprised if ten per cent of those who claim to hold the Melchisedek Priesthood will remain true and faithful to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the time of the seventh President, and that there would be thousands that think they hold the Priesthood at that time, but would not have it properly conferred upon them."[1]

Shortly before his death, President George Q. Cannon, while addressing the Saints at Draper, remarked:

> "The day will come when men's Priesthood and authority will be called into question, and you will find out that there will be hundreds who have no Priesthood, but who believe they hold it, they holding only an office in the Church."[2]

Brigham Young sounded a warning, expressing a veiled fear that the Priesthood would, at some time, fail to function with many of the Saints. He said:

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1 Marriage, Ballard-Jenson Correspondence, p. 104.
2 Ibid 94.

> "There is nothing that would so soon weaken my hope and discourage me as to see this people in full fellowship with the world, and receive no more persecution from them because they are one with them (a condition which the present leaders boast of today as having been accomplished). In such an event, we might bid farewell to the Holy Priesthood with all its blessings, privileges and aids to exaltations, principalities and powers in the eternities of the Gods."[1]

We have previously called attention to the petition of the Church for amnesty, dated December 1891. One part of that petition reads:

> "To be at peace with the Government and in Harmony with their fellow citizens who are not of their faith, and to share in the confidence of the Government and the People, our people have VOLUNTARILY put aside something (plural marriage, the law of the Priesthood), which all their lives they have believed to be a sacred principle."[2]

Plural marriage, it must be remembered, is a law of the Priesthood.[3] Joseph Smith taught that unless this principle was received and lived, the Church could not go on, and even the Priesthood itself would have to give way to another people whom the Lord would select to carry off the work. Then to "VOLUNTARILY" give up this "LAW OF THE PRIESTHOOD" in order to be in harmony with the world and at "peace with the Government", can mean nothing less than the forfeiture of the rights of the Priesthood, so far as the Church as an organization is concerned. One cannot expect to "have his cake and eat it too." The leaders said they "voluntarily put aside" this law of the Priesthood. The Lord didn't do it; the people and leaders did it. This is what the new order accomplished by the two actions mentioned:

1. The Church surrendered the Priesthood by

1 Journal of Discourses 10:32.
2 Contributor 13:197; Smoot Investigation, 1:18.
3 See D. & C. 132:61, 64.

"voluntarily" putting it aside to please their enemies.

2. An order is issued that in effect prohibits the conferring of Priesthood, restricting candidates to certain offices in the Church.

As one Elder aptly puts it: "A man is assigned to a certain seat in the meeting house, but is denied entrance to the building. Of what good is the seat?" Under the present policy men are ordained to an office, but are denied the Priesthood right to function in that office. Protestant Churches in like manner install similar officers, but confer no Priesthood. President John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, were doubtless shown the present situation, causing them to make the predictions they did concerning the loss to the people of priesthood privileges.

If, as the present leaders attempt to make Joseph F. Smith say, "It is a distinction without a difference," and "either will do," and if that is the position of the leaders today as they intimate in the "Addenda", then why not permit the officiating brethren to use either form? Why discipline them when they revert to the form prescribed by President Smith? Candidates for Priesthood have been denied the right to have it conferred on them as formerly. There must be a reason for this that the leaders have not explained.

What, then, is the result of the present order of the Church with respect to Priesthood? It can be nothing else than that many of the brethren, assuming to officiate in the ordinances today, are doing so without priesthood authority. This is a bold statement. We cannot help it. The Priesthood of God can no more receive birth in a counterfeit channel than can baptism. We have shown that an attempt at baptism by another denomination, has no standing in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; neither can one receiving only an office in the Church claim priesthood authority thereunder. Priesthood, as explained by President Smith, does not originate with office – it is greater than any office. The office is merely an appendage to the Priesthood.

Then in matters of Priesthood, the Church has definitely strayed from the orders of Heaven.

Free Agency

Since we treated this subject in a former chapter under the title of "Dictatorship," we will but briefly touch on one phase of it now:

Among the most treasured endowments of a God-fearing people is that of FREE AGENCY. Indeed, without this and its proper exercise, man cannot be exalted into the presence of God and be an heir with Him. Voluntary servitude will find no welcome in the kingdom of God. The declaration of President John Taylor, previously published (in part) in *Truth Magazine*, has direct bearing. We repeat it:

> "I was not born a slave! I cannot, will not be a slave! I would not be a slave to God! I'd be His servant, friend, His son. I'd go at His behest; but would not be His slave. I'd rather be extinct than be a slave. His friend I feel I am, and He is mine: – a slave! The manacles would pierce my very bones – the clanking chains would grate upon my soul – a poor, lost, servile, crawling wretch to lick the dust and fawn and smile upon the thing who gave the lash! Myself – perchance my wives, my children to dig the mud, to mould and tell the tale of brick and furnish our own straw! ... But stop! I'm God's free man: I will not, cannot be a slave! Living, I'll be free here, or free in life above – free with the Gods, for they are free: and if I'm in the way on earth, I'll ask my God to take me to my friends above!"[1]

Was ever a sublimer truth expressed in nobler form? O, that the Saints in this day felt the same urge for liberty to think, to pray, to speak and to act in accordance with their knowledge or conceptions, in the noon-day light God has given them. As before quoted, the Lord said:

> "Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to DESTROY THE AGENCY of man, which I, the Lord, had given him; ... I caused that he should be cast

1 Life of John Taylor, Roberts, p. 424.

down and become Satan."[1]

And to Enoch later:

> "And in the garden of Eden gave I unto man his AGENCY."[2]

If in the beginning of creation the eternal laws of heaven prescribed such a penalty for attempting to deprive man of his agency, can we look for a modification in that law in the present day? Isn't the act just as wicked now as it was in the dawn of creation? All through the ages the displeasure of the Lord has followed the efforts of man to exercise unrighteous dominion over his fellow man; perhaps retribution has not always been sudden and swift, but it has come and will continue to come with that unerring exactness that marks the execution of God's laws in all ages.

Brigham Young said:

> "The volition of the creature is free; this is a law of their existence and the Lord CANNOT violate His own law, were He to do that He would cease to be God. He has placed life and death before His children, and it is for them to choose. If they choose life, they receive the blessings of life; if they choose death, they must abide the penalty. This is a law which has always existed from all eternity, and will continue to exist throughout all the eternities to come."[3]

If the Lord cannot "violate His own law" as pertaining to the "free agency" of man, how then can man justify his own efforts to rob others of their agency?

We have shown how the present leadership of the Church has sought to subordinate man's agency to his own wavering impulses. The oath of allegiance demanded of certain of the Saints is the point we will examine now. Let it be remembered

1 Moses 4:3-4.
2 Ibid 7:40.
3 Discourses of Brigham Young, 95.

that refusal to sign this oath caused action to be taken involving the standing in the Church of twenty-one adults, (approximately one hundred souls and the disorganizing of the Ward) in Short Creek, Arizona; eleven adults, (approximately some fifty souls) in Cache valley; besides numerous scattered cases. In no case did the accused refuse to sustain the present leader of the Church as its leader, but they did refuse to sign an oath of allegiance that compelled them to endorse all future acts of the leaders, RIGHT OR WRONG, and also to repudiate the principle of Celestial or Plural marriage which the Lord, through former servants, had declared a necessary requisite to the highest exaltation in the heavens.

We will consider the oath, sentence by sentence:

> (a) "I, the undersigned ..... solemnly declare and affirm that I, without any mental reservation whatsoever, support the Presidency and apostles of the Church."

Support them in what? Why in all that they say and do, whether RIGHT OR WRONG; support them in their business mistakes as well as in their spiritual apostasies. At their behest, we will cease to preach the Gospel without "purse and scrip," cease to wear the real garment of the Priesthood; cease to believe certain principles of the Gospel as taught by Joseph Smith and his immediate successors, and cease to rely upon the Holy Scriptures for the pure word of God. And this menial subserviency we accept "WITHOUT ANY MENTAL RESERVATION WHATSOEVER."

As shown in these columns the former leaders taught just the opposite: that Saints should learn for themselves the will of the Lord and do it, and not follow men except as they, in turn, follow the Lord and square their actions, counsels and commands with the revelations of the Lord.

> "Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall harken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the holy

Ghost."[1]

(b) "That I repudiate any intimation that any one of the Presidency or apostles of the Church is living a double life."

Why exact such an affirmation? If certain of the leaders are accused by reliable witnesses of living contrary to their public teachings, why should the Saints, in the absence of proof to the contrary, be forced to believe them innocent, and so certify? If the Brethren are not living a double life, the Lord will vindicate them and punish their accusers. Virtue is its own reward. To attempt to force men on pain of their liberty and their standing in the Church, to believe one to be virtuous or right, at once casts a cloud of suspicion on the accused. The pursued thief cannot always hope to elude capture through the cry of "catch thief!" made with a view of fastening attention on others.

Any attempt on the part of the present leaders to teach that no plural marriages have been performed under Priesthood sanction, since the Woodruff Manifesto, is false and must be repudiated by all true Latter-day Saints, as we have shown in previous articles.

(c) "That I repudiate those who are FALSELY accusing them."

Certainly any honorable man will repudiate KNOWN false accusers – character assassins. But such a requirement in the oath under consideration can only be a "smoke screen." It is, to say the least, amateurish. To think, in this enlightened age, intelligent beings should be placed under such an oath in order to retain their standing in an organization professing to be the church of God!

(d) "I denounce the practice and advocacy of plural marriage as being out of harmony with the declared principles of the Church, AT THE PRESENT TIME."

1 2 Nephi 28:31.

Wasn't the practice of plural marriage out of harmony with "the declared principles of the Church" years before, when, following the Manifesto, many of the leading brethren took their plural wives and counseled others to do likewise? Why were they not handled then? Why were they not required to subscribe to such an oath? Wasn't the act of disregarding the rule of the Church at that time just as much a crime as it now is? And why denounce the "practice and advocacy" of an eternal law necessary to be lived for a complete salvation? Is it a sin to advocate a law of heaven – a law which God said, even He could not revoke, because it was eternal? Every President of the Church, including the present President, has stated in unequivocal terms that short of obedience to that law, men cannot be exalted to become Gods or even the Sons of God. The present leader has, on numerous occasions since the Manifesto, held up before him the Doctrine and Covenants containing the command of God that the Saints practice plural marriage,[2] with the statement that EVERY revelation in that book MUST be lived to avoid damnation; then why "cut a man off" because he refuses to denounce that which the President says MUST be lived?

And again, since members of the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve have both advocated, entered into and lived that holy principle subsequent to the time it became a "rule of the Church" not to do so, how can one with consistency "denounce" them in such practice, and at the same time "support them without any mental reservation whatsoever?" One might as foolishly at one and the same time, attempt to ride two horses each traveling in an opposite direction. That the present leader, as well as former leaders of the Church, have sustained and lived that law of marriage since the "rule of the Church" made it ecclesiastically illegal to do so is a fact easily proven. President Joseph F. Smith, as heretofore pointed out in *Truth Magazine*, so testified before the Committee on Privileges and Elections in the Reed Smoot case, and so did President Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, B. H. Roberts and others. Heber J. Grant was arrested, plead guilty and fined in the District Court for such act. Then how can one denounce" a principle and at the same time uphold men who are living in it?

2 Section 132.

There is another phase of this expression – "declared principles of the Church" – we wish to briefly notice at this point. It has become common with the present leaders to refer to the Priesthood and Gospel as, "The Priesthood of the Church," "The Gospel of the Church," "The principles of the Church," etc., with evident intent of shielding themselves from an open assault on the Priesthood of God, etc. But the expressions are misnomers. There is no "Priesthood of the Church." Priesthood is entirely independent of the Church. It is the Priesthood of God. As President J. Reuben Clark recently stated: "The Priesthood is essential to the Church, but the Church is NOT essential to the Priesthood." The Church may enjoy the rights and privileges of the Priesthood of God, but it must receive it as a delegated right. Similarly, the Church has no Gospel. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to the Church is delegated, UNDER THE POWERS OF THE PRIESTHOOD, the duty of teaching the Gospel, and that duty and privilege does not carry with it the right to change it. And so with the expression, the "Principles of the Church." If the leaders actually mean that latter expression, it must differentiate between the "principles of the Church" and the principles of the Gospel. To place men under oath to conform to the "Priesthood, Gospel or principles of the Church" is to compel acceptance of man made rules in preference to God's rule. As stated, a number of the leading brethren admitted living in opposition to the "rules" (or "principles") of the Church contending at the same time that they were living in harmony with the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and that could be no crime.

The Saints should learn to differentiate between the misleading expressions of the brethren today and the true Priesthood and Gospel.

(e) "That I myself am not living in such alleged marriage relationship."

No leader can rightfully stand at the head of the Church without "abiding in that law"; "For it is not meet," said the Lord in the 1882 Revelation, calling President Grant to the apostleship, "that men who will not abide my law, (the law of plural marriage) shall preside over my Priesthood." "A man obeying a lower

law," said President John Taylor, "is not qualified to preside over those who keep a higher law." These truths are self evident and fundamental.

Therefore, to require a man to repudiate the living of Celestial or Plural marriage is tantamount to requiring him to repudiate the Gospel. And this is just what the "Oath" requires.

True servants of the Lord never try to enthrone themselves by forcing oaths of allegiance. The Savior said, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself." Joseph Smith maintained that he taught the people correct principles, and they ruled themselves. Brigham Young plead with the Saints; said he: "I exhort you to THINK FOR YOURSELVES, and READ YOUR BIBLE FOR YOURSELVES, get the HOLY SPIRIT FOR YOURSELVES, and PRAY FOR YOURSELVES, that your minds may be divested of false traditions and early impressions that are untrue."[1] Can one imagine Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, and such men attempting to force others to follow them, RIGHT or WRONG, under threat of excommunication? Prophets of God do not require men to sign oaths of allegiance.

"But," says one, (and this is a very general statement now being made by uninformed Saints), "the present leader is God's mouthpiece to the Church and therefore can not go wrong." Hold! Wasn't the High Priest, Eli, God's mouthpiece in the Holy Temple, and did he not do wrong?[2] Wasn't King Saul counted as "God's anointed," and yet he did wrong? Wasn't David proclaimed by the Lord as a "man after the Lord's own heart," and yet he fell? Didn't Judas eat, sleep and pray with the Lord; and didn't Oliver Cowdery see the Lord in the Kirtland Temple, and receive the Holy Priesthood under the hands of Peter, James and John! They, with scores of others having like experiences, all did wrong! The present leader admits never having had any such super-natural experiences, never has he received a revelation from the Lord, nor seen His face, nor been visited by angels; then what is there to guarantee him against doing wrong? Indeed, as we have shown, he claims Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, and others ALL made mistakes in claiming that Plural Marriage was a necessary part of Celestial Marriage and that

1 Bowery, June 18, 1865.
2 1 Samuel 3.

none can receive the highest exaltation without entering into this order of marriage. It is child's talk to say that the present leader, or any other leader, cannot or could not go wrong, or make mistakes in leadership. Brigham Young is quoted as stating at a Conference held in Provo, in substance, that this people will be led onto the very brink of hell by its leaders, and then the one "Mighty and Strong" would come and set the Lord's House in order. How could the Lord's House get out of order if the leaders cannot go wrong?

True Prophets do not attempt to prove the divinity of their calling by the menial subserviency of their followers; they need no such wavering support.

It is well known that there are thousands of people in the Church, in good standing, who are of the same faith and feelings as the Short Creek, Millville and Logan Saints mentioned herein. If all the Saints were forced to subscribe to such an oath, where would the act lead to? To procure universal signatures to such a document would mean the enthroning of a dictatorship in the Church with motives and powers not unlike those of Lucifer. It was not the Spirit of the Lord that dictated that oath. God requires the heart and not the signature.

On the question, then, of "Free Agency" the Church has gone into a state of apostasy.

Chief Causes Of Apostasy

President Joseph F. Smith named as the outstanding elements tending to apostasy:

(1) Flattery by prominent men of the world.
(2) False educational ideas.
(3) Sexual impurity.

It is patent that many members of the Church are influenced by all three of these causes; many others by the first two and nearly all the Saints, in greater or less degree, by the first – Flattery. Never in the history of the Church has there been such an effort made by the leaders and Saints alike to harmonize their actions with world ideas and to receive the praises of Babylon. Perhaps there has never been a time in history when the leader of God's Church has bid for and received a greater measure of "flattery from prominent men of the world."

In accepting the Presidency of the Church at the hands of the Saints, the present leader announced as his policy, the popularizing of the Church with the world – to make friends with the world. This policy has been carried out with amazing zeal and success. One chief testimonial to the fact we take from the Improvement Era of September, 1936. In his address before the delegates attending the "Dearborn Conference of Agriculture, Industry, and Science," President Grant received such a hearty applause, that on being invited to speak a second time, was led to say:

> "I want to express my gratitude for this wonderful applause. It might interest you people, to know that I spent three years in Europe (1903-1906), and that during that entire three years, I was not able to get one line in the newspaper in refutation of some of the libelous attacks upon the people that I represent."

Certainly it is a marvelous thing that the President of the Church should receive applause as I have here tonight from this

body of man. Truth is the rock foundation of every great character, and we believe that we have the truth. The change is something marvelous and I lack the language to express my gratitude for it. THE PREJUDICE AGAINST THE MORMONS HAS ALL DISAPPEARED. I am grateful for it.

The last expression – "The prejudice against the Mormons has ALL disappeared. I am grateful for it," – is significant. Why has the prejudice disappeared and what grounds are there for gratitude? Have the people of the world thus engaged in "flattering" the Church and its leader, any greater love for the Gospel now than they had when the President was arrested by them and fined for living a principle of the Gospel? Let the President return to living the word of God in fulness and see how quickly prejudice will again manifest itself. The reason why prejudice has disappeared is that the Church has surrendered all objectionable parts of its religion, and we see nothing in that act to rejoice over. For instance, Lucifer did not like Celestial marriage, knowing as he did that through that principle men could qualify for eternal lives. Hence, through his emissaries, he demanded the surrender of that principle. This being accomplished, along with the surrender of other vital points of doctrine, as we have treated, the devil issued orders that the Church must be treated like the other branches of his church organization, with this exception: That those members who still persist in living the fulness of the Gospel must be persecuted – be made to sign an oath of recantation, or be destroyed. This is the situation in a nut shell. Why the President should be grateful for this sort of friendship can only be accounted for on the theory of "Flattery of prominent men of the world." The Apostle James said:

> "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whoso therefore will be a friend with the world is the ENEMY OF GOD."[1]
>
> And Paul said:
>
> "Yea, and ALL that live godly in Christ Jesus SHALL

1 James 4:4.

suffer persecution."[1]

One would think the Saints, rather than feeling grateful, would shroud themselves in sackcloth and ashes, and pray night and day for deliverance from the bondage which their sins have laid upon them. For not to be permitted to worship the Lord in accordance with His commands is bondage in the most virulent form.

Flattery definitely tends toward apostasy. The Lord uses no flattery – it is the weapon of the adversary. The Psalmist was led to say:

> "Lead me O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth, their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they FLATTER with their tongue. Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee."[2]

In eternally eulogizing the President and fabricating his greatness, inordinately magnifying his virtues, as is being done in pulpit and press, a great injustice is committed against him. We appreciate the good sense in bestowing flowers on the living rather than wait for death, but it serves no good purpose to smother one in flowers to his personal detriment. If superlative eulogies are to be given, it is best that they be released over the bier.

A year ago the Church publications went wild, vying for first place in the art of "flattery." In the November issue of the Improvement Era alone the President's picture was produced some 28 times; and the extravagant and inordinate eulogies of that issue transported him from the extremes of a God to that of a common crook – one article being entitled, "President Grant as Jim the Penman."[3] This man, "Jim the Penman", in early fiction,

1 II Timothy 3:12.
2 Psalms 5:8-10.
3 Improvement Era, p. 701.

was a notorious forger – a crook with an unenviable prison record. We mention this incident, not as an attack on the President's character, but to show the extremes to which the art of flattery may go when unbridled.

It is sadly true that on the trail of all great men, as well as men not so great but on whom temporary greatness "has been thrust," is an army of "camp followers." These mental degenerates vie for preference. They prostrate themselves before their pretended idols. They flatter and fawn and become ugly tale-bearers, often resorting to the extremes of dishonesty in their attempt to ingratiate themselves into the confidences of their intended victims. In their wicked excesses, such puppets hesitate not to besmirch good characters and destroy confidences. These miserable parasites employ the wiles of flattery and often succeed in gaining audience thereby, where truthful and honorable men are denied it. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend," said Solomon, "but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." And again: "A lying tongue hateth those that are affected by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin." A speaker at the April Conference of 1935 compared President Grant with the Savior and the Prophet Joseph Smith. Said he:

> "I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe in Joseph Smith. ... I believe just as sincerely and truly in Heber J. Grant. I have known him personally for years, and I know that Joseph Smith was no greater in doing his work than President Grant is in doing his."

It was in this same spirit that the Primary Associations at their conference last year staged a dramatic scene in connection with the entrance of President Grant in the Tabernacle, near the closing hour. As he entered, the audience, no doubt, being previously drilled, rose and with uplifted hands, voiced this salutation:

> "President Grant –
> "We feel it a pleasure to serve thee
> "And love to obey thy command."

The author of that beautiful hymn – "We thank Thee O God for a Prophet," – addressed his lines to God; but on the occasion mentioned, their real meaning was wrested and made to apply to the President. Similar occurrences have taken place in different Wards in the Church. In the Wells Ward, a few Sundays back on the occasion of dedicating the meeting house, the Bishop announced to the congregation that the President of the Church would wait on the outside until the song – "We Thank Thee O God for a Prophet" – was commenced, the congregation arising, then he would walk in – which he did, a prearranged entrance calculated, no doubt, to bestow flattery upon him.

It might, of course, be claimed that such acts, sacrilegious as they may seem to some, were committed without the President's approval. Granted. But what an excellent opportunity each occasion gave the President to correct such doings.

It is due the President that his statement at the October, 1931, conference be mentioned: "When I hear the song, 'We thank Thee O God for a Prophet, to Guide Us in These Latter Days,' I never feel as though it applies to me." Commendable as such a protest appears, one must have no illusions about the aged leader enjoying such demonstrations. Apparently the continued flattery of recent years has completely overcome his objections.

We remember the President's predecessor, Joseph F. Smith, in a social gathering one evening, on being referred to by a speaker of the occasion, as a "Prophet," mildly rebuked the speaker and begged the Saints to stop referring to him as a Prophet, Seer and Revelator. He counted those titles too sacred to be so generally used. Said he, "Address me as Elder Smith or President Smith, and my counselors in like manner." Such commendable modesty must appeal to all true Latter-day Saints.

Both Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were designated by the Lord as Prophets, Seers, Translators and Revelators. Those seemed to be distinctive titles which the Lord, and not the people, bestowed on the President of Priesthood and on the Patriarch; why should such sacred titles, EMPTY AS THEY ARE WHEN VOID OF DIVINE SANCTION be foisted on the present leader, except in the spirit of flattery? The late President B. H. Roberts, in deploring the famine of spiritual guidance the Saints were suffering from, is credited with the

remark from the pulpit: "We have prophets that have ceased to prophesy; seers that cannot see, and revelators that do not reveal." And yet, in the light of this truth, courageously uttered, the Saints go on dreamily sustaining the leader as a Prophet, Seer and Revelator, little understanding the meaning of such terms.

A true Prophet of God would not have Saints disciplined for having literature in their homes which, while telling the truth, has no official endorsement; or for reading and teaching the Doctrine and Covenants; nor would he tolerate such outrages by his subordinates. Yet that is actually occurring in the Church today, as we have shown in this series of articles. Think of it! Men and women of supposed intelligence, deprived of the privilege of reading, thinking and expressing those thoughts in this "noon-day" hour of the Gospel dispensation! How many times have Mormon Elders cast criticism at other denominations for seeking to prevent their communicants from listening to the word of the Lord from a Mormon view point, and yet the Church leaders today are guilty of the very thing they have for years criticised others for doing; they refuse to let their own members think, and delve for themselves, threatening them with excommunication if they do.

We are again reminded of the sage remark by Elder J. Golden Kimball:

> "God, how I hate prejudice! A man who is prejudiced cannot be just!"

And what is this state of affairs leading to? We find Bishops, High Counselors and Stake Presidents openly avowing their intention of following the counsel of the leaders, even though they "KNOW IT TO BE WRONG." A Bishop in Twin Falls, Idaho, recently declared:

> "I am going to do what President Grant tells me to do. If he tells me to sprinkle for baptism, I will do it."

It was under this spirit, no doubt, that one Stake President expressed the wish that he could have the pleasure of helping to "string up" the editor of *Truth Magazine*.

Conclusion

We have shown in this series of articles on, "IT IS WRITTEN":

1st. That the word of God is PARAMOUNT. That it is given His children "that they might come to understanding." That any instruction or doctrine advanced, not in harmony with the "WORD" must be rejected. And that the Doctrine and Covenants, as President Rudger Clawson stated at the late Conference of the Church, "covers every phase of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," and "justifies the DEEPEST CONSIDERATION AND STUDY."

2nd. That both the world and the Church is pursuing a course that tends to dictatorships; and which is contrary to the will of Heaven and which, if not checked, will also lead to final dissolution. However, in the case of the Church, the Lord has promised to have His "house set in order," to which the faithful among the Saints are looking forward.[1]

3rd. That, in harmony with past experiences and the predictions of Prophets of God, there is a definite "falling away" from the Gospel as revealed to and established by the Prophet Joseph Smith. That the Saints generally and the Church as an organized body in particular, are strongly tinctured by the spirit of apostasy; some of the principles of the Gospel having been entirely surrendered and even repudiated.

4th. As we read the scriptures, we cannot avoid the sad conclusion that the present leaders of Ephraim are fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah:

> "For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them ARE DESTROYED."[2]

Also that of Jeremiah:

> "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the Prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by

1 D. & C. 85.
2 Isaiah 9:16.

their means; and my people love to have it so."[1]

In the light of conditions as we conceive them to be, we are greatly heartened in our faith with the feeling that the Church will not again be driven into the wilderness; nor will the Priesthood be taken from the earth. The present dispensation is to stand and the fulness of all dispensations gathered into it.

I can tell you something more, brethren and sisters, friends and the United States, and all the world; the Lord Almighty will not suffer His Priesthood to be again taken from the earth, even should He permit the wicked to kill and destroy this people, The Government of the United States and all the kings of the world may go to war with us, but God will preserve a PORTION of the MEEK and HUMBLE OF THIS PEOPLE to bear off the Kingdom to the inhabitants of the earth, and will defend His Priesthood; for it is the last time, the last gathering time; and He will not suffer the Priesthood to be again driven from the earth.

> "... And I say to the Saints, that, if they will truly PRACTICE their religion, they will live and NOT be cut off."[2]

As much as we regret having to record these facts, the necessity for it makes the task imperative. The incidents recited show unmistakable steps towards mass apostasy. The Saints are fast falling into errors; and the Gospel, once so glorious to them and effective in guiding their footsteps, is becoming a dead letter in its most important phases. The Church, once distinctive and powerfully potent, is declining to the level of the churches of Babylon. It has been anything but a pleasant task to bring these solemn facts into the light of day. We cherish the Gospel. We love the Saints; they are our people, and, to our notion, the best people on the face of the earth. Our hearts are wrapped up in the Church and her institutions. We know it to be the Church of Jesus Christ, and that its destiny is to teach the fulness of the Gospel to the purification of the honest in heart and the final

1 Jeremiah 5:30-31.

2 Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 2:183-4.

triumph of truth. We are exposing error that the light of truth may be admitted. We rejoice in the knowledge that many of the Saints are opening their eyes to the facts being presented, and that they are being led to greater diligence and faithfulness in living the Gospel plan. We close this series of articles on "It Is Written" with an appropriate excerpt from a Priesthood editorial published in the Millennial Star in 1882:

> "Let the weak knees quake, and the false hearts flutter and tremble; let those of little faith ignore and forsake, if they choose, the holy principles of eternal life committed to their care! Let the winds howl, and the waves dash, and the storms burst forth in all their fury! There are those remaining whom GOD HATH PRESERVED for perilous times, whoso knees have never bowed to Baal, whose hands have never faltered, whose hearts have never trembled, "who have not worshiped the beast, neither His image, neither have received His marks upon their foreheads or in their hands." THESE SHALL STAND STEADFAST, FIRM ROOTED AS THE ROCK UPON WHICH THEIR HOPES ARE BUILT, and though the floods come and the rains descend and the winds blow and beat upon their house, IT SHALL NOT FALL. But it will withstand the fury of the tempest, and endure forever, for it is founded upon a rock – upon the rock of OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL – the GOSPEL, the WHOLE GOSPEL and nothing but the GOSPEL, a foundation as unchangeable as truth, as indestructible as the eternal elements, as ever enduring and immovable as the unshaken throne of JEHOVAH!"[1]

1 Millennial Star 44:312-14.

Other books by Joseph W. Musser

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The Economic Order of Heaven
Michael, Our Father and Our God
The New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage
A Priesthood Issue
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